A STUDY OF IOWA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD REORGANIZATION OF IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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by

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An Abstract of a Dissertation by
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The purpose. The purpose of this study was to determine Iowa school board members' attitudes about suggested methods to accomplish school district reorganization in Iowa, what factors should influence such reorganization, and what agency should perform the act of reorganization.

Procedure. A questionnaire was developed and one Department of Education consultant and the Executive Director of the Iowa Association of School Boards assisted in establishing its face validity. With the assistance of area education agency directors and local school district superintendents, the final questionnaire was distributed to all local school board members.

Findings and conclusions. Board members are told often by their local school district patrons that most important reasons for opposition to school district reorganization are: (1) children would live too far from their attendance center, (2) the town would die if the school district were to reorganize, and (3) transportation would be too complicated. Results of this study show that, according to board members, the two most important factors to consider in reorganizing school districts are the ability to meet state minimum standards and the breadth of the instructional offerings of the district. Further, the study shows that board members prefer the petition method over the dissolution method of reorganization. The study also shows that board members prefer the local education agency as the unit to determine school district reorganization, and board members prefer the natural progression method of reorganization over all others.

Recommendations. Local districts should have the first opportunity to meet the needs of their resident pupils. Local boards should consider both methods of reorganization currently allowed by Iowa law. Local districts should have the power to determine whether they will or will not reorganize with other districts. Local districts should be required to meet state minimum standards or reorganize with other districts that do, or will, after the merger.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States Constitution sets apart those responsibilities specifically assigned to the federal government and leaves others, including the assumed responsibility for education, to the individual states. Each state can govern its people in a manner deemed appropriate as long as such governance does not conflict with powers expressly reserved to the federal government.

The state of Iowa, as all other states, controls and regulates public and private education. Iowa provides free educational opportunities for all children between the ages of five and twenty. In Iowa, children between the ages of seven and sixteen, unless they have completed the eighth grade, are required by law to attend school. This education is provided at public expense through a complex mix of state and local financial support.

It has been, and continues to be, the philosophy of the people of the state of Iowa to provide the young people with the best educational opportunities possible in the most efficient manner. The people of

Iowa expect a validated return on their investment in education.

The people of Iowa have chosen to delegate operation of the individual public school districts to the citizens residing within the borders of those districts. As a result, a strong emphasis on local control permeates the management of Iowa's public schools.

Iowa schools developed from the Homestead Act of 1862 which provided for a public school in each township. One section of land was set aside near the center of each four square miles to be used to create a separate school district, usually consisting of a kindergarten through eighth grade one-room schoolhouse. There were approximately 14,000 school districts in the state of Iowa by 1900 including separate elementary and high school districts.

As Iowa grew in population and urbanized, elementary and high school districts began to consolidate, as well as kindergarten through grade twelve districts, in order to provide greater educational opportunities in a more efficient manner. This process of consolidation continues today, usually in the form of reorganization by the merger of two or more contiguous public school districts. In 1952 the number of independent public school districts was 4,558. The period 1952 to 1969 was a time of dramatic consolidation and the number of

public school districts was reduced to 457 [Department of Education (D.E.), 1986c] . The number of districts declined in this period because many small communities ceased to exist or their citizens no longer chose to educate their young people in a local independent district. As the transportation system, including vehicles and roads, improved, all elementary districts were gradually merged with high school districts to form single kindergarten through twelfth grade districts.

While the number of districts declined by 4,101 from 1952 to 1969, student enrollment increased to a peak of 659,888 (D.E., 1986c). The decline in the number of districts during that 17 year period represents 99.5 percent of all district reorganization for the last 34 years.

Since 1969 there has been a large decrease in the number of school age children but no corresponding decrease in the number of public school districts. The effect is a dramatic increase in the number of districts with small enrollments. Table 1 shows the trend towards districts with smaller enrollments over the twenty year period from 1966-67 to 1986-87. Some districts grew in enrollment while others declined. The number of districts enrolling fewer than 500 students increased 63.0 percent during this time while districts of more than 500 students enrolled declined

Table 1

School District Enrollment 1986-87 Compared to 1966-67

Number of Students	1966-67 Number of Districts	1966-67 Percentage of Total	1986-87 Number of Districts	1986-87 Percentage of Total	Increase/ Decrease Number of Districts	Percentage Change
100-299	23	5.0	86	19.7	63	273.9
300-499	96	21.1	108	24.8	12	12.5
500-999	191	42.0	139	31.9	-52	-27.2
Total <1,000	310	68.1	333	76.4	23	7.4
1,000-1,999	87	19.1	65	14.9	-22	-25.3
2,000-2,999	33	7.3	13	3.0	-20	-60.6
3,000-plus	25	5.5	25	5.7	0	0.0
Total >1,000	145	31.9	103	23.6	-42	-29.0
Totals	455	100.0	436	100.0	-19	-4.2

by 28.0 percent. Such dramatic changes signify the return to smaller more costly districts. In addition the number of districts with enrollment of fewer than 1,000 students increased by 23 or 7.4 percent while the number of districts with enrollment of more than 1,000 students declined by 42 or 29.0 percent as shown in Table 1. The decline in number of districts during the 17 year period 1969 to 1986 represents only 0.5 percent of the total decline since 1952 while 99.5 percent of all district consolidation took place between 1952 and 1969. While Iowa's student population declined by 31.6 percent between 1969 and 1986, Iowa's total number of public school districts declined by only 4.6 percent.

As public school district enrollments decline pressures to reorganize school districts increase. Problems arising include the emergence of classes which contain fewer students yet full time teachers with salaries that continue to increase. Fixed costs continue to increase even when students in various facilities become fewer and fewer. Transportation costs increase as bus routes continue to cover entire geographic districts while ridership declines. Political pressures emerge as district residents and state mandates cause educators to seek expansion and improvement of programs, while state aid, which is based on students

enrolled in each district, shrinks resulting in teacher and program reduction rather than expansion. Questions developed from this information are:

1. Will reorganization of Iowa's public school districts solve these problems?
2. What are the most important factors that should be considered in school district reorganization?
3. If reorganization is imminent, what agency should administer it?
4. What is the most effective method of reorganization that should be utilized?

Iowa Code Chapter 275 identifies the only two methods of formal reorganization allowed by Iowa law, the petition method and the dissolution method.

The petition method of reorganization is the most commonly used method for merging two or more school districts. With this method two or more districts totally merge geographic areas and combine all facilities to form a new single district. This takes place by a vote of the citizens of both districts which is also initiated by the citizens.

The dissolution process is an alternative to the petition method. This method originates with the local school boards, not the citizens. It assigns the authority and responsibility to a Board-appointed commission. The dissolution commission has one year from its creation to meet with all boards of the contiguous districts, seek input at hearings, develop

a plan for merging with one or more contiguous districts, and present a proposal to the district's voters which may be approved by a simple majority. The difference between the petition and dissolution methods of reorganization is that the petition method requires that the district in its entirety merge with one or more other districts, while the dissolution method allows for the district to be split into parts which are then merged with other contiguous districts.

Between 1965 and 1987 all local district reorganization in Iowa originated with citizens' petitions, the petition method. The only successful reorganization efforts during that period took effect on July 1, 1985. On that date Colfax and Mingo reorganized into a single district as did Sibley and Ocheydan (D.E., 1986d). There have been a variety of agreements between districts which have resulted in partial mergers but which are not considered true reorganization efforts. Such mergers include whole grade sharing of programs and joint use of telecommunication systems. Whole grade sharing occurs when two districts, through local Boards of Directors' actions, elect to share entire segments of students in order to enhance educational opportunities and receive financial incentives from the state. For example, school district A and school district B may decide to whole grade share grades seven through

twelve with grades seven through nine held in district A and grades ten through twelve held in district B. The result of such sharing is that students from both districts benefit, the district becomes more efficient, and additional dollars come to both districts because of the sharing agreement from state incentives.

Telecommunication systems are designed to allow students to enroll in advanced level courses and have a teacher hundreds of miles away. Such programs enable classes of two or three students to exist when it would be otherwise nearly impossible due to the problem of being able to afford such low pupil teacher ratios. Using this system enables a district to provide such programs in an economical manner.

In 1986 the Iowa General Assembly mandated that plans for the restructuring of local school districts be developed by the State Board and Department of Education (Graziano-Davis, 1986). In meeting that requirement, the State Board of Education appointed a panel of advisors to develop potential restructuring plans which could later be considered by the Iowa General Assembly. That panel completed its work and a final report was presented to the legislature in January of 1988. The General Assembly elected to take up the issue no earlier than January of 1989.

Statement of the Problem

Iowa continues to experience difficult economic times caused by a national recession, depressed farm prices and a steady outmigration of the state's population [Iowa Economic Forecasting Council (I.E. F.C.), 1986]. Iowa's schools are affected by these economic difficulties through reductions in state aid and financial support in general which has contributed to fewer dollars available for educational purposes than most other states [Committee on Strategies for Excellence (C.S.E.), 1986]. School districts receive financial aid based on student enrollment of the district. Those school districts gaining enrollment will receive more dollars than those districts which are declining in enrollment. However, districts are guaranteed 100 percent of their previous year's financial support each year. For example, if the financial support level is $2,500 per pupil and enrollment in district A increases by 50 students from one year to the next, then district A would receive an additional $125,000. If district B had the exact same enrollment from year one to the next, no increase in dollars would be realized. If district C lost 50 students from year one to the next, no increase would be realized nor would there be a reduction in financial support as

there is no penalty for districts which have declining enrollment.

A major problem in Iowa, a state of declining population, is how to continue to provide high quality education efficiently with declining resources. A second part of this problem is to assure that all Iowa students be provided equal educational opportunities. Iowans seek to provide the best educational opportunities possible in the most efficient manner possible.

The General Assembly of Iowa has determined that it has the responsibility to encourage, support, and if necessary, even force school districts to operate efficiently. It has further determined that the best way to improve efficiency of operation is through school district reorganization.

The reorganization for efficiency concept leads to a new question. How is reorganization to be accomplished? Reorganization needs to be accomplished in an acceptable manner; one that will be approved by the legislature, be accepted by local public school district residents, and provide better educational opportunities for Iowa's young people.

There are currently two methods of reorganization (previously described) and five distinctly separate plans being proposed for consideration by the legislature. First, there is the minimum enrollment system which

would require each district to have at least 1,000 students or to reorganize with another district or districts until this enrollment minimum is met. Secondly, there is the county system wherein there would be one public school district in each county which would reduce the number of districts in Iowa from 436 to 99. Thirdly, there is the natural progression plan which calls for continuance of the present reorganization methods and incentives for sharing and merging as previously described. Fourthly, there is the commission plan which calls for the establishment of a special commission to reorganize all public school districts in accordance with guidelines set by that commission [Iowa State Restructuring Panel of Advisors (I.S.R.P.A.), 1987]. Finally, there is the enrollment standards plan which would require local districts to meet state approved minimum specified standards, both physically and financially, within a single district or reorganize until that is accomplished (Scott, 1987). The question is: Which of these plans or systems best meet Iowa's unique geographical financial and governmental requirements? In order to answer that question all public school board members in the state of Iowa were individually surveyed. This survey reflects school board members' responses to the previous question for use by other groups including but not limited to the

state legislators, Iowa Association of School Boards, and local education agencies.

For reorganization to occur, leadership and planning must come from individuals elected to serve as members of the local school district Board of Directors as well as from their appointed superintendents. It follows then that the legislators need to know how individual school board members feel the reorganization process ought to be done, by what agency, and under what circumstances. If that information can be determined and if there are consistencies in opinions, then perhaps the entire process can go more smoothly.

Prior to this study no attempt to determine board members' views concerning school district reorganization had been done. However, since those opinions are considered important to any school district reorganization process, a survey to determine such views is appropriate.

For purposes of this study the problem involved these questions: What do school board members believe is the best method to accomplish school district reorganization, what factors should influence such reorganization, and what agency should perform the act of reorganization?

The following topical areas were surveyed to determine attitudes toward reorganization, to identify

factors to consider in reorganizing school districts, and to determine preferred reorganization plans.

1. Given the following alternatives, what are those most often given to board members by local residents who oppose school district reorganization?

   A. Transportation would be too complicated.

   B. Taxes would increase.

   C. The town would die if the school district reorganized.

   D. Too many students would go to a single district.

   E. Children would live too far from their attendance centers.

   F. There would be more exposure to drugs and alcohol.

   G. There would not be enough activities in which the students could participate.

   H. Real estate property values would decline.

   I. Existing facilities would be wasted.

2. Of the following current methods of school district reorganization, which is most acceptable?

   A. The dissolution method.

   B. The petition method.

3. Given the following alternative agencies, which one should determine reorganization?

   A. The local district.

   B. The legislature.

   C. A state appointed commission.

   D. The area education agency.

4. Of the following factors that would be considered in reorganizing school districts which are most important?

   A. The number of students in the district.

   B. The square miles in the district.

   C. The breadth of instructional offerings.

   D. The cost of education per student.

   E. The transportation of students in the district.

   F. The taxable valuation in the district.

   G. The accessibility to attendance centers.

   H. The number of professional staff in the district.

   I. The ability to meet state minimum standards.

5. Given the following alternative proposed methods of reorganization, which should be used to create fewer more efficient school districts?

   A. The minimum enrollment plan.

   B. The county-like plan.

   C. The natural progression plan.

   D. The restructuring commission plan.

   E. The restructuring standards plan.

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. H_o: There is no difference among reports to board members of reasons expressed by patrons as objections to school district reorganization.

2. H_o: There is no difference among board members for their preference of the two current methods of reorganization allowed by law.

3. H_o: There is no difference among board members' preferences for alternative agencies to perform reorganization of school districts.

4. H_o: There is no difference among board members in preference of factors which should be used to determine reorganization.

5. H_o: There is no difference among board members in preference for specific reorganization plans which will be considered by the 1989 Iowa General Assembly.

6. H_o: Board members' attitudes toward reorganization concepts are not related to enrollment sizes of their respective school districts.

7. H_o: Board members' attitudes toward school district reorganization concepts are not related to their years of experience as board members.

8. H_o: Board members' attitudes toward district reorganization concepts are not related to their geographic location if defined as the local area education agency

Significance of the Study

Since the turn of this century Iowa's public school districts have been continuously reorganizing. As the state's population grew, school districts became larger geographically and in population. This was caused by a general statewide population growth and by mergers with contiguous school districts. However, after 1969 Iowa's school district enrollments began to decline, a phenomenon that was minimal in some districts but dramatic in others. Over the last twenty years student enrollment has declined by more than 30 percent, but

there has been little district reorganization. This has created school buildings which house relatively few students as related to their capacities. Total costs of operating each district do not decline and per pupil cost increases.

This study attempted to identify potential reorganization methods which would be most acceptable to Iowa's school board members. Any clear preferences emerging from this study should prove useful to legislators in Iowa and serve as a possible starting point for other states faced with potential school district reorganization.

Definition of Terms

AEA - Area Education Agency; the educational services unit that provides supplemental services to a geographic region of the state's local school districts in the areas of special education, educational services, and media services.

D.E. - Department of Education; the more recent term for the state regulating agency which governs Iowa's local school districts. The term is used interchangeably with Department of Public Instruction.

Reorganization - The act of creating a single school district by combining contiguous districts.

School District - A public local education agency which exists for the purpose of providing a free

education to children between the ages of five and twenty who live within designated boundaries.

Limitations of the Study

This descriptive study will not provide a definitive answer to the problem of Iowa school district reorganization, but it will provide information from which better solutions may be formulated.

Summary

In this chapter, the purpose of the study was described, sub-problems and definitions were stated, hypotheses were determined, and the significance and limitations of the study were given.

Chapter Two is a review of related literature. The remaining chapters contain information relative to the methodology and presentation of data. The final chapter summarizes the findings, conclusions, discussion, and recommendations as a result of this research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

This literature review is presented in four categories: national perspectives, Iowa legislative review, Iowa perspectives, and current state directives.

National Perspectives

In 1948, the National Commission on School District Reorganization concluded that a satisfactory district should have no fewer than 1,200 pupils and as many as 10,000 between the ages of six and eighteen [National Education Association (N.E.A.), 1948]. This commission recognized the impracticability of such a goal when applied to sparsely populated areas. However, the same commission concluded that each elementary school should have enough pupils so that there could be one grade for each teacher and recommended 300 students as a minimum for each elementary school (N.E.A., 1948). It further recommended a minimum enrollment for each high school of 300 pupils (N.E.A., 1948).

A report of the American Association of School

Administrators Commission on School District Reorganization concluded that the method of distributing state funds should not encourage the retention of unnecessarily small school districts [American Association of School Administrators (A.A.S.A.), 1958]. The report did not generate specific enrollment figures to define the term "unnecessarily small school districts".

The number of school districts in the United States was reduced from 110,270 in 1944 to 62,969 by 1954. This number was further reduced to 51,941 only two years later (Office of Education, 1956).

Reorganization of school districts between 1944 and 1956 was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Strengthen and preserve local control over education by developing school districts throughout the state that will be effective under existing conditions.
2. Make possible an efficient expenditure of the taxpayers' money.
3. Provide better educational opportunities for thousands of children.
4. Help enrich community life (Chisolm, 1958).

The study identified above further identified gains made by the reorganized districts in specific areas.

1. Schools in reorganized districts were clearly superior in the number of new class and extra course additions to the curriculum and in the number of renovations and buildings added to the physical plant.

2. In reorganized districts, teachers were better prepared academically and received higher average salaries than those in non-reorganized districts.

3. After reorganization, the operating tax levy was reduced in Nebraska, but it remained reasonably constant in Illinois and Missouri.

4. Reorganized districts reported saving up to 17 percent in pupil transportation costs (Chisolm, 1958).

Some studies have determined that school districts can be too large when considering academic achievement and graduation rates. In a 1986 study, Sher found that states with the best records on the American College Test of collegiate aptitude were in school districts normally organized on a sub-county or community basis. None had an average school district size above 3,000, and four of the top five districts averaged less than 2,000 student enrollment. These same top five states ranked from fourteenth to thirtieth nationally in terms of average per pupil expenditures. Sher also found that the bottom ranked states, with one exception, were organized on a county wide basis and their average district size was two to five times greater than that of their top ranked counter parts (Sher, 1986). Table 2 shows that Iowa ranked first in American College Test scores in the school year 1983-84 [National Education Association Ranking of the States (N.E.A.R.S.), 1986].

Table 2

Comparison of Top-Ranked and Bottom-Ranked States in Terms of ACT Scores

ACT Scores (1985)	Dominant Type of School District Organization	Number of Operating School Districts	Average School District Size
BEST			
Iowa	Community	441	1,127
Wisconsin	Community	433	1,790
Minnesota	Community	435	1,621
Colorado	Community	181	2,994
Nebraska	Community	968	276
WORST			
Mississippi	County	153	3,059
Louisiana	County	66	11,848
West Virginia	County	55	6,754
Arkansas	Community	371	1,164
New Mexico	County	89	3,034

Note: "Community" refers to school districts organized at a sub-county level.

In research conducted in 1986 Sher and Schaller found that schools with the highest graduation rates had an average school size of 979 students while those schools with the poorest graduation rate had an average size of 8,706 students (Sher, 1986). Table 4 shows that Iowa ranked fourth in graduation rate in the school year 1983-84 (N.E.A.R.S., 1986).

Sher in a study directed by the North Carolina School Board Association in 1986 concluded that there was no reason to believe that the elimination of all small and special chartered districts would save the state significant amounts of money, result in greater cost effectiveness, produce a higher quality of education or promote genuine fiscal or recial equity. He further concluded that under normal conditions the impetus for reorganization ought to be a local one and the ultimate decision should remain firmly in the hands of the local voters. He added that the state should discontinue all backdoor approaches to reorganization and that organizational issues such as merger are very rarely the key to enhancing the quality and efficiency of public education. He concluded further that making school districts bigger is merely a diversion from the greatest task of finding new ways to positively influence the lives of children and to increase the effectiveness of those who work in their service (Sher, 1986).

Table 3

Comparison of Top-Ranked and Bottom-Ranked States in Terms of High School Graduation Rate

High School Graduation Rates (1984)	Dominant Type of School District Organization	Number of Operating School Districts	Average School District Size
BEST			
Minnesota	Community	435	1,621
Nebraska	Community	968	276
North Dakota	Community	292	401
Iowa	Community	441	1,127
South Dakota	Community	187	658
Wisconsin	Community	433	1,790
WORST			
Louisiana	County	66	11,848
Alabama	County	128	5,641
Florida	County	67	22,328
New York	Community	715	3,741
Mississippi	County	153	3,059
Georgia	County	187	5,620

Note: "Community" refers to school districts organized at a sub-county level.

Iowa Legislative Review

Through the years the Iowa legislature has provided for the following types of school district structure in the state:

1. Township School Districts: These districts were the initial form of school organization provided for in the Iowa Constitution. Legislation enacted after the ratification of the Iowa Constitution permitted the subdivision of township districts into subdistricts, which occurred in most instances. Later legislation permitted the merging of subdistricts into total township organizations or partial township organizations. One-room schools proliferated under this structure.

2. Rural Independent School Districts: These districts were formed when the majority of voters in township subdistricts favored independent types of organization. This form of school organization permitted the election of a board of directors of three area residents and resulted in the conduct of the numerous rural one-room schools in Iowa. In 1929, there were 9,302 such districts in operation.

3. Independent School Districts: These districts were formed in cities, towns, or villages with over 100 residents. The districts could legally include the city, town, or village and such contiguous territory as was authorized by the majority of voters in that territory. Subdistricts containing a village with 75 or more residents were also permitted to organize independent school districts.

4. Consolidated School Districts: This type of district was created in any area with not less than 16 government sections of contiguous territory in one or more counties. The purpose of such organizations was for the conduct of an approved common school rather than numerous one-room rural schools.

5. Community School Districts: All districts created or enlarged after May 2, 1957, under the provisions of 275.27, Code of Iowa, have

> been designated community school districts. All such districts maintain high schools. Recent legislation, however, has allowed a district to discontinue any or all grades seven through twelve and negotiate agreements for those students to attend contiguous accreditied school districts. This action now meets the requirements of Iowa Code section 275.1 relating to a district maintaining a kindergarten and twelve grade system. (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

The first recorded instance of objectives or goals spelled out legislatively occurred in 1945 with the statutory pronouncement: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to encourage... the reorganization of school districts into such units as are necessary, economical and efficient... and which will insure equal opportunity for all children of the state" [Code of Iowa and Acts of the General Assembly (C.I.A.G.A.), 1945, p.275].

The only legal minimum standard to be met in forming a new district in Iowa today is the requirement that at least 300 pupils, kindergarten through grade twelve, must have been enrolled in public schools in the proposed area the preceding year (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

Iowa Perspectives

When Iowa became a state in 1846, there were 416 districts in operation. Prior to statehood, laws were passed by the territorial government in 1839 and 1840 which aided in organizing and financing free public education. Because Iowa was part of the Michigan territory,

laws pertaining to public education were structured after the Michigan school law. The first school to operate in Iowa was located in Lee county in 1830. At the time Iowa became a territory in 1838, 40 schools were in operation (Gilliland, 1971).

Iowa historians classified the school organizational patterns into six categories including:

1. The Unorganized Period.
2. The Township Period.
3. The Subdistricting Period.
4. The Consolidated School Movement Period.
5. The Organizational Stability Period.
6. The Community School Movement Period (Gilliland, 1971).

The Unorganized Period lasted from 1830 until 1858. During this period schools were created as a result of individual community initiative and desire, but within no general legal framework (Gilliland, 1971). Legislation of the territorial government, as well as the state legislature after 1846, permitted various approaches to financing and organizing. Iowa legislators made use of three types of legislation: permissive, mandated, and incentive. This legislation was designed to encourage change in school structure. The first legislative authority to provide instruction above the elementary level was granted in 1849. Blooming township of Muscatine county established the first such school

in 1851 and Dubuque established a central school in 1856.

The Township Period took place between 1858 and 1872. With the passage of the Township Law of 1858, the township was established as the legal entity for organizing school districts (Gilliland, 1971). The laws of this period permitted the creation of an unlimited number of schools within an area, but specified the township as the legal area for taxing and organizing public education. In 1858, legislative permission was granted to establish county high schools (Gilliland, 1971).

The Sub-districting Period lasted from 1872 until 1900. Legislation in 1872 permitted the sub-division of townships into several school districts. This legislation resulted in immediate and chaotic fragmentation of the township school system. At the turn of the century, There were 4,873 local districts. Of these, 4,241 operating districts directed 12,623 ungraded schools and 632 districts operated 5,875 graded rooms. One-half of the independent and three-fourths of the township schools had an enrollment of fewer than ten pupils (Gilliland, 1971).

The years from 1900 until 1922 included the Consolidated School Movement Period. The first transportation laws, enacted in 1897, permitted transportation

payments from school contingency funds when a savings in total expenditures would result. The first consolidated district was founded in 1897 in Buffalo Township, Buffalo Center. During the next fourteen years, school districts which had been created on a township basis, those districts which were located only in the rural portion of each county, and in subdivided townships. Those rural districts then merged with towns to form larger more centralized school districts. The creation of this type and size district was consistent with the modes of transportation and communication of the period. By 1910, four years after the Consolidated School Law had been passed, only ten such districts had been created. The real impetus came as a result of legislation in 1911 which provided a $500 incentive for normal training courses. This legislation was the first type of incentive passed which encouraged school districts to expand the curriculum to meet the growing needs of the students. People in those districts which were considering mergers and which couldn't afford to expand the curriculum became more open to reorganization because of the new financial incentives and the opportunity for the children to have improved educational experiences. In 1913, incentive legislation was passed that provided payments of $250 to $500 to districts with adequate facilities and equipment as well as certified teachers

in the area of home economics, agriculture, and other industrial and vocational subjects (Gilliland, 1971).

The Organizational Stability Period lasted from 1922 until 1953. During this period the pattern of school organization remained almost constant. In 1922, there were 4,839 legally organized school districts; by 1953, there were still 4,558. As consolidated schools began to operate and expand their curricular programs, their costs of operation increased. During this period taxation rates were lowest in rural independent districts. As rural areas organized with towns, costs increased, and high tax rates for schools were levied predominantly in the larger city districts. A 1945 legislative enactment permitted rural school districts, those not part of any incorporated town, to be closed if tuition costs at another school did not exceed the per operating costs of the rural school (Gilliland, 1971).

The years from 1953 until 1965 constituted the Community School Movement Period. This comprehensive statewide reorganization movement resulted from legislation passed in 1953. This legislation was designed to accomplish two objectives. The first objective was to create districts consistent with legislative desires for equal educational opportunities in efficient and economical districts. The second objective was to eliminate non-high school districts,

those which provided education only through the eighth grade. The final phase of the Community School Movement Period was initiated by the Iowa General Assembly in 1965. The 61st General Assembly passed legislation requiring all areas of the state to become part of a legally constituted school district maintaining a high school by July 1, 1966 (Gilliland, 1971).

Iowa's state superintendents actively promoted school district reorganization during the latter part of the nineteenth century and during the first two decades of the 1900's. Results were limited until 1913.

People are slow to change schools without some type of force to cause the change. In the consolidation movement the force was money. In the reorganization which took place forty years later, around 1953, the force was the enactment of new laws and the leadership of the State Board of Public Instruction and the state superintendents and their staffs (Smith, 1969).

Arguments against reorganizing one-room rural schools in the early 1900's were much like those given some fifty years later in Iowa. The biennial report of the state superintendent in 1901 listing the common arguments against consolidation indicated the following:

1. First, and in almost every instance, bad roads.
2. Fear that the expense will be greater than under the present system.

3. Feelings that the children are kept too long on the road and too long from home. It is said that children who live farthest from the central school would have to leave home before daylight and would not return until after dark in the winter time. Mothers feared that children would suffer from these long rides.

4. Fear that careless drivers might be employed who would not attend to the comfort of the children, and whose influence upon the children would not be good.

5. The people object to the removal of the little schoolhouse from the neighborhood since it furnishes in many places, the only public meeting house. They say it will break up the Sunday school, the literary society and other neighborhood gatherings. There is a sentiment concerning the little schoolhouse that objects to its obliteration from rural life.

6. Many farmers think that the closing of the school near their farm and the location of a central school several miles away would greatly increase the value of real estate near the central school and reduce the value of the farms farthest removed from it.

7. In some places it is claimed it will take the older boys out of school earlier than if they could attend nearer home where they would have more time nights and mornings to help about the farm.

8. The objection is often made that the children are wanted at home before and after school to help do chores, and that if they must start early for a distant school and return late they will not be able to render this assistance, and will miss learning much of the practical work of the farm which they should acquire when young.

9. That the evil influences will be much greater in the central school with its large number of pupils of all ages and conditions, because they will not have the close supervision of the teacher which they received in the little district school.

10. That this centralization of schools will remove the school from the people and will be a step away from democracy toward paternalism.

11. That many teachers will be thrown out of employment. It is even suggested by some of the superintendents that some of the little district schools are kept in operation to furnish jobs for relatives and friends of the directors.

12. That the children receive less individual attention in the large school than they receive in the small district school, where the teacher has time to give private instruction to nearly every pupil.

13. That it is doubtful if the graded school is better than the ungraded school.

14. That the children must wear better clothes when they attend the large central school than they would have to wear in the little district, thus adding to the burdens of parents.

15. That there will be greater danger of spreading contagious diseases where all the children in a township are brought together.

16. That children will suffer from having to carry cold lunches to the central school (Smith, 1969).

A tremendous increase of interest in school district reorganization was expressed in the latter part of 1953. The reorganization law was again considerably strengthened in that year. Smith, in an historical study, found the following reasons for increased interest in school district reorganization:

1. The educational program discussion carried on for a number of years was reaching an attentive ear.

2. Parents were demanding a better educational program for their children.

3. World War II resulted in men going into every part of the world. These fathers wanted their children to have advantages equal to or better

than those of children they observed during the war.

4. People feared that if they waited too long, territory next to their district would be lost to some other district.

5. School costs were going up, and taxpayers wanted to get the most they could for their educational dollar (Smith, 1969).

Ahrenholtz, in 1949, found that there was no expressed opposition to reorganization in Iowa from the Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, women's clubs, service clubs, or teachers' organizations. He also found that 45 percent of the county superintendents believed their counties were not prepared for reorganization while 7.5 percent indicated their counties were ready. Ahrenholtz further determined that:

1. Some county superintendents do not understand the term reorganization. They think of reorganization as being the same as consolidation.

2. Some county superintendents know little about the problems of school district reorganization in their counties.

3. The general public is very poorly informed about reorganization.

4. Business interests are strongly opposed to moving small high schools from their communities.

5. The difference in tax levies in different school districts, especially between town and rural, is a big hurdle to overcome in any reorganization program.

6. Churches which maintain their own schools will oppose school district reorganization because of the possible increase in their taxes.

7. The lack of surfaced roads in southern Iowa will be a problem for school district reorganization.

8. District loyalty and pride, fostered by competitive athletics and other competition between schools, is an important problem to district reorganization.

9. People feel that school district reorganization will result in the loss of much local control of their schools.

10. The lack of adequate housing is a problem to reorganization but not as difficult to overcome as some of the others.

11. Most town school superintendents and teachers are poorly informed on school district reorganization. Some oppose reorganization but most of them just fail to give adequate leadership and interest to the project.

12. The state is giving adequate leadership on the surveys, but some county superintendents feel it is not giving adequate leadership on the entire project of reorganization.

13. The Farm Bureau in almost all parts of Iowa actively favors school district reorganization.

14. Organizations other than the Farm Bureau, have not given reorganization of school districts enough thought to have formulated an opinion, or are hesitant to express themselves, or are not yet sufficiently aroused about reorganization.

15. Teacher organizations, from which active leadership is needed, have taken no definite stand on reorganization.

16. Almost all the county superintendents are of the opinion that their counties are not ready for any general plan of school district reorganization.

17. Some of the county superintendents think the one or more room rural elementary schools can be reorganized into larger units.

18. Some of the county superintendents think it will be very difficult to reorganize any large number of small high schools into larger units.

19. In almost all counties, where school district reorganization appears to have a chance to succeed, there are good roads. This study did not reveal anything else which has brought reorganization nearer in some counties than others.

20. Prospects for reorganization are not as good in southern Iowa as they are in northern Iowa.

21. County superintendents as a whole see great obstacles to reorganization.

22. Some county superintendents think the plan of reorganization being promoted by the state department is not adapted to rural Iowa.

23. Some county superintendents are not convinced that larger units are doing better jobs than smaller units (Ahrenholtz, 1949).

In a 1964 study, Kammeyer found no support for the notion that the distance children must travel to get to the new school influences the opposition to reorganization. His findings supported the conclusion that people opposed reorganization because they did not desire to send their children to a high school where it would be more difficult for the student to win scholastic and athletic honors. Opposition also appeared to increase when the proposed reorganization was with a district with less taxable property and if there was likelihood that taxes would be increased if the merger took place. He further found that opposition increased as the population center of the losing community got smaller this allowed several possible interpretations. Perhaps the most reasonable was that for the very small village or hamlet the high school was the dominant institution in the community.

The high school may have been the only remaining local public service provided in the community. Thus, the loss of the school either symbolized, or actually was, the end of the community. If this was the case, then it was not surprising that local voters would cling to the sole remaining function of the community (Kammeyer, 1964).

Wright identified three major reasons for reorganizing school districts.

1. The first reason is to provide the best possible education for all of the children in all of the schools in the state.

2. The second reason is to provide quality educational programs at the least possible cost.

3. The third reason is to devise a fair and equitable distribution of these costs among all segments of our society (Wright, 1960).

School district organization as was emphasized in Hansen's study is not an end in itself. Organization, he found, only permitted or inhibited the development and implementation of educational opportunities. In his conclusions, Hansen attempted to summarize the degree to which Iowa's present school district structure in 1968 enhanced meeting educational needs at levels of quality, comprehensiveness, efficiency and economy identified as desirable (Hansen, 1968). Hansen concluded that the present organization in Iowa:

1. Fails to provide equitable educational opportunity to all youth and adults.

2. Inhibits the development of comprehensive sequential

educational programs and provision for services to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all youth and adults.

3. Encourages citizens to accept lower levels of quality than are deemed necessary and desirable.

4. Prevents realizing the maximum return from the tax dollars invested in education.

5. Does not encourage or permit the ready implementation of educational innovations in organization, curriculum, or technology.

6. Is not flexible enough to permit adaptation to changing social, cultural and economic conditions emerging within the state.

7. Lacks formalized coordination between various segments of the state system of education (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen also submitted a list of recommendations to the State Board of Public Instruction for their serious consideration. These included the following:

1. Criteria and guidelines for school district organization be adopted by the State Board of Public Instruction and serve as the guide for future adjustments in the structure of education within the state.

2. Local administrative school districts in Iowa be organized on the basis of not fewer than 3,500 students.

3. The concept of administrative districts with multiple attendance centers should be implemented more extensively in Iowa.

4. Where time/distance factors permit, local administrative districts should be organized around city centers with corporate populations of 2500-5000.

5. The State Board of Public Instruction should request legislation to create a School District Reorganization Commission.

6. Legislation should be requested which would impose a moritorium on reorganization of all twelve graded school districts pending the recommendations of the Reorganization Commission and action of the 64th General Assembly in 1971.

7. Limitations on school construction should be implemented during the period the moritorium on reorganization of local districts is in effect.

8. A statewide network of area education service agencies should be created to supplement and complement the efforts of local school districts.

9. Increased attention must be devoted to vocational education at the high school level.

10. The desirability of merging all area education programs and services into one administrative organization should be assessed and appropriate action be taken within the next ten years.

11. Education at all levels within the state system of education must become more relevant to the needs, interests and capacities of individual students.

12. Increasing concern and leadership needs to be directed to urban education by all branches and divisions within the Department of Public Instruction.

13. The roles and responsibilities of personnel within the Department of Public Instruction should be realigned consistent with changing local districts and intermediate units.

14. The metro approach to planning and/or organization should be initiated in and around the largest city centers in Iowa.

15. Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPBS) approaches to allocating educational resources and evaluation of their outcomes should be initiated more extensively (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen implied that as a state undertakes the rigorous work involved in organizing its educational structure

to meet the demands of its people in contemporary society, clear objectives must underlie such a program. Failure to develop and state these, and failure to communicate such objectives to those affected, would be grievous omissions in such an important undertaking. The following are Hansen's objectives of state programs for school district reorganization:

1. Each student should have the opportunity to participate in an educational program which will fully meet his individual needs.

2. The educational structure of the state shall be organized to provide an equalization of the costs of education throughout the state.

3. The educational structure of the state shall be so organized to provide students with well trained classroom teachers.

4. The educational structure of the state shall be organized to efficiently utilize the specialized and technical school personnel in the state.

5. The educational structure of the state shall be organized in such a way that best use of monies expended for education may be realized (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen found that larger schools, with greater pupil numbers can and do offer greater program breadth than their smaller counterparts. The larger the size of high school, the greater number of credits offered in each curricular area. It would seem that larger school size is a proper and important objective in order to provide a greater variety and depth of course offerings and to make available special services such as groupings, acceleration and guidance (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen concluded that it is especially important that the fiscal resources of a state become available to more students in order to reduce the inequities in educational programs which result from the fiscal inequities. He added that it is virtually impossible to state precisely how large a school district should be in order to have a solid financial base. Revenue sources simply are not located where an equal distribution can be made throughout the state under existing tax structures in many states. Hansen also concluded that a school district should be large enough to have a tax base capable of supporting an educational program which meets the needs of youth residing in the district (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen found support for the generalization that larger schools and school districts generally have staff members with higher levels of professional preparation than do smaller schools and school districts. Size alone is not the sole determinant in larger schools and school districts having more highly trained personnel. Factors such as broader programs, greater local wealth, and school system personnel policies which attract better trained teachers are other reasons which contribute to this differential (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen found that specialization training of teachers is often wasted, or poorly used, in small school districts.

His study determined that this aspect of teacher utilization pointed to excessively low pupil teacher ratios in small schools and districts. Only as high schools reached the 500-999 size category did pupil teacher ratios rise to a 25-1 ratio. The most efficient pupil teacher ratio was found in systems which enrolled 2,000 or more pupils in grades one through twelve. Another aspect of utilization is assignment of teachers to courses in their major fields of preparation. The percentage of pupils taught by non-certificated teachers decreased as schools became larger. The largest percentage of pupils taught by those teaching out of certificated fields was found in small high schools. Teachers working in areas of their certifications in all fields increased as the size of the high school increased (Hansen, 1968).

Hansen's review of the literature revealed that small school districts and small schools were, when compared to their counterparts, more costly to operate when using costs per pupil as a criterion. This suggested that monies spent for education in a state may not be spent in a manner in which the greatest educational return may be received. An inverse ratio was often indicated in this area; as size went up, the cost per pupil went down (Hansen, 1968).

Suggestions concerning size are related to objectives. Unless certain sizes can be reached, program objectives

may not be met. The importance of the size factor is not in the numbers themselves, but what the greater numbers can produce (Hansen, 1968).

In 1978, an Iowa Department of Public Instruction task force studied the equality of educational opportunities across the state and made the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the concept of comprehensive high school programs be encouraged and further that such programs be made available to all students. This recommendation recognizes the equity in terms of programs does not exist for students in all districts, and further that program equity is tied to other issues such as school finance and school district structure.

2. The restructuring of districts should be considered by noting that equity of educational programs is most efficiently and effectively offered in districts as the enrollment of districts increases. The size of districts could be established through the following alternatives:

   A. County School Systems: The county is the state's fundamental unit of government. Each county has a separate taxing authority, maintains essential information and records through the offices of county recorder, auditor, assessor, and treasurer. Historically, the county has been the fundamental unit for educational services outside the local district. It has a successful history in terms of education services and is a most viable government unit. Thus, it could provide a substantial and secure base for school district structure.

   B. County-Like Systems: County-like districts could be structured to recognize several districts within a county, especially in the more densely populated areas.

   C. Minimum Enrollment Approach: This approach is the least prescriptive of the three methods in that only the minimum enrollment is established and the method of achievement is determined locally [Iowa Department of Public Instruction (I.D.P.I.), 1978].

Drier found that 28 school districts had reorganized between 1966 and 1981. The average distance was 7.4 miles between the joined districts. The average population of the smaller community was 448 and the larger community 1,742. The average school district kindergarten through grade twelve enrollment of the smaller district was 223, and the larger district 621 (Drier, 1982).

In his summary, Ghan cited reasons generally in support of closing school buildings as well as those in opposition to such closings. Included in that list were:

1. Benefits cited/rationale for action related to education considerations included:

    A. Ability to increase the number of course offerings, and to increase classroom contact time.

    B. Increased ability to balance class sizes.

    C. Improved staff communications.

    D. Improved music and art programs, as well as library services.

    E. Removes unhealthy competition between schools.

    F. Eliminates inequity in pupil/teacher ratios between elementary schools.

    G. Creates flexible grouping opportunities, and eliminates combination classrooms.

2. Benefits cited/rationale for action related to structure considerations included:

    A. Cost savings as a result of reduced teaching and administrative staff, and reduced cost for building operation.

    B. Avoid the need for additional property taxes to maintain existing structure.

C. Age and condition of building to be closed.

3. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to procedure followed included:

   A. School district did not follow DPI guidelines.

   B. School board acted in haste.

   C. Other alternatives were available which the school board should have considered.

   D. Information provided by the district disputed, and manipulation of figures by superintendent implied.

   E. Consideration of closing more than one school should be handled in separate votes.

4. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to educational considerations included:

   A. The action is not necessary because the school meets the minimum standards established by the state.

   B. Benefits of the neighborhood school are diminished or eliminated.

   C. Increased class size may reduce educational quality.

   D. It is believed that the new mixture of students in different grade levels will have a detrimental effect on education quality, or social development.

   E. School closings may have an adverse equity impact, and may be detrimental to the welfare of children from minority and low income families.

   F. Frequent adjustments to school organization and intra-district boundaries is harmful to the children who were unable to remain in a single school setting for a reasonable amount of time.

   G. Safety considerations for students who would have to travel longer distances.

5. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to structural possibilities included:

   A. Cost savings may be overestimated. Transportation costs may increase as a result of the closing.

   B. School budgets would not really be reduced, resources would simply be redirected to other services or programs.

   C. Negative economic and emotional effects on the community.

   D. Concern about how vacant building will be used.

   E. Decline in neighborhood property values as a result of school closing (Ghan, 1986).

Ghan also cited reasons relative to school district reorganization in Iowa similar to that for school building closings. Included in that summary list were the following:

1. Benefits cited/rationale for action related to education considerations included:

   A. Reorganization would provide a solution to the affect of declining enrollment on the quality of education and extracurricular activities. Broader educational and vocational opportunities could be provided to students.

   B. Reorganization would allow more student interaction and the exchange of ideas.

   C. The number of preparations for each teacher would be reduced.

2. Benefits cited/rationale for action related to structure considerations included:

   A. Cost savings as a result of reduced teaching and administrative staff, and reduced cost for building operation. Cost savings were pursued as a result of declining enrollment, and limited finances.

3. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to procedure followed included:

A. Residents who signed reorganization petitions were misled, misinformed, not given all the facts, and did not understand the petition. It was cited that many who originally signed the reorganization petition, later filed objections to the reorganization.

B. The AEA should not be involved in reorganization.

4. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to educational considerations included:

A. The action is not necessary because the school meets the minimum standards established by the state.

B. Increased class size would reduce the amount of personal attention students receive from teachers.

C. The school is able to provide a quality education.

D. Graduating seniors achieve in their chosen fields and the school has met the needs of students going on to higher education.

E. As long as the school fulfills our needs and can operate in the black, then the school should be kept open.

5. Concerns/reasons cited for opposition related to structural possibilities included:

A. The school can pay its bills and meet its budget.

B. Negative economic and emotional effects on the community.

C. The schoolhouse tax may not be available to the reorganized school. That issue should be disposed of before reorganization is approved (Chan, 1986).

The 1974 Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts provided a comprehensive review of literature. Several concluding comments were as follows:

1. School size is not absolute; it is but one of many factors related to educational quality.

Good education can and does occur in schools ranging in sizes from small to large.

2. School district size is not absolute; district size, too, is but one of many factors relating to educational quality and operational efficiency. Good education can and does occur in school districts ranging in sizes from small to large.

3. Schools and school districts that are small can achieve quality in educational programs but only if sufficient funds are available and are properly spent to compensate for the diseconomies of smallness.

4. Schools and school districts can be too large, as well as too small in terms of program quality and efficiency of operation. Some form of decentralization is the most frequently recommended and used method of compensating for the disadvantages of bigness.

5. The appropriate size of schools and school districts will vary from locality to locality.

6. There are numerous practices in educational administration, organization, and instruction that can help alleviate the problems of unsatisfactory school and school district size [Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts (S.R.S.S.S,D.), 1974].

There are many studies which have been unable to conclusively determine that size of the school or the school district does make a difference depending on the variable studied. Hartung found in a 1953 Illinois study and Opstad in a 1958 Iowa study that there was no difference in drop out rates between various enrollment size school districts. In studies by Anderson, Page, and Smith in 1958; Hoyt in 1959; Kiesling in 1968; and Baird in 1969; no difference in academic achievement was noted dependent on size of

schools or districts. In studies by the Ohio Education Association in 1959 and Smith in 1961, students from high schools of more than 200 enrollment tended to have higher academic achievement than those high schools with fewer than 200 enrolled. A Minnesota study in 1969 found that students from larger enrollment high schools tended to score higher on achievement tests while those from smaller enrollment high schools tended to perform better in academic classes. Dickerson found in a 1958 Arkansas study that students from smaller high schools tended to have a greater college dropout rate than other students while Clement in a 1969 Wisconsin study found the opposite may be true. Barker in a 1962 Michigan study found that student participation in activities was greater in high schools of fewer than 1,500. (Iowa currently has three high schools of more than 1,500 students, Des Moines Lincoln, Davenport West, and West Des Moines Valley.) Rajpal found in a 1967 Iowa study that larger school districts generally had better prepared and more experienced teaching staffs (S.R.S.S.D., 1974). Table 4 is a summary of research on size of schools and school districts which reported inconclusive findings or presented no recommendations.

Table 4

Research Conducted in Midwest High Schools Reported in Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts Reporting No Recommendation or Findings were Inconclusive

Source	Year	Variable Studied	Findings	State
Hartung	1953	Drop-out Rate	No significant difference	Illinois
Anderson, Page & Smith	1958	Academic Achievement	Size not important	Kansas
Dickerson	1958	Retention rate in College	Appear to have more college dropouts from smaller schools until adjustment is made for mental ability	Arkansas
Opstad	1958	School Holding Power	No significant difference	Iowa
Hoyt	1959	College Achievement	No significant difference	Kansas
Ohio Education Association	1959	College Achievement	Students from schools of over 250 had better college records	Ohio
Smith	1961	Pupil Achievement	Students from schools of 200+ had higher ACT scores	Arkansas

Table 4 (continued)

Source	Year	Variable Studied	Findings	State
Barker	1962	Extra class Activities	Favor schools of less than 1500 students	Michigan
Rajpal	1967	Education Quality and Expenditures	Larger schools had more experienced and better prepared staffs	Iowa
Kiesling	1968	Pupil Achievement	Little evidence to support school size as a factor	Project TALE
Baird	1969	High School and College Achievement	High school and college achievement related negatively to high school and college size	American College Testing Student
Clement	1969	Pupil staying power in College	May favor small schools	Wisconsin
Minn. Public School Survey	1969	Pupil Achievement	Larger schools score higher but others have higher education attainment	Minnesota

(S.R.S.S.D., 1974)

Ghan found that enrollments of at least one-hundred pupils per grade are best at the secondary level. With the trend toward decreasing population in some rural areas, it may thus be inferred that enrollment prospects for at least a decade ahead should be considered in planning new school districts. The district population should be large enough to support an effective comprehensive high school. The four main objectives of such a high school would be:

1. To provide the general education that is common to the needs of all future citizens. This core of education, many times referred to as the basic skills, would involve learning the skills of communication, basic competencies in mathematics, understandings of social and economic concepts, awareness of the history and governmental structure of our world and nation, and familiarity with the physical and biological sciences of the world in which we live.

2. To provide a choice of programs necessary for the transition of pupils from school to the world of work; whether the decision to terminate a formal education program comes prior to the completion of high school or upon receiving the high school diploma.

3. To provide the sequential programs and experiences necessary for continuing a post-high school education.

4. To provide services and activities which assist the pupil to make maximum utilization of the instructional program (Ghan, 1986, p.17).

Ghan further determined the following as factors which would determine the size of an adequate district:

1. Size of the various attendance units necessary to achieve a sound educational program for all children.

2. Ability of a given area to provide a satisfactory base of financial support.

3. Interest and ability of the area to provide the necessary lay leadership.

4. Proper consideration for efficient and economical use of specialized and administrative personnel.

5. Reasonable transportation possibilities within a given geographic area (Ghan, 1986, p.18).

In 1971, the Governor's Educational Advisory Committee developed a list of five specific recommendations related directly to education reorganization in Iowa. These recommendations were as follow:

1. The number of local administrative districts for elementary and secondary education in Iowa should be drastically reduced. The committee feels that the new organizational structure should consist of county-like units except in situations where population or geographic conditions preclude this possibility.

2. The 64th General Assembly should create an Organization Commission for Quality Education to thoroughly analyze and study the organizational structure of local school districts in Iowa. This commission should plan a new structure for Iowa's schools to be submitted to the 65th General Assembly.

3. The General Assembly should declare a moratorium on new school construction and school reorganization. Proposed new school construction or organizational changes should be required to gain commission approval during the organizational period.

4. The committee recommends that concurrent with the reduction of the local administrative districts that the county, joint county, and merged county school systems be abolished.

5. The State Board of Public Instruction should restructure its administrative body, the Department of Public Instruction, so that it is better able to provide efficient, quality education through meaningful leadership, research, evaluation, and services on a statewide basis [Governor's Educational Advisory Committee (G.E.A.C.), 1971, p.1].

In 1979, a statewide economy task force recommended that in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of small districts, centralized administrative units should be created to reduce expenditures in non-instructional areas. By consolidating currently independent administrative functions into approximately 120 offices, in relative parity with Iowa'a present county structure, significant economies could be achieved. In accomplishing the restructuring, the legislature should appoint a reorganization committee to work with local groups in developing viable consolidation plans. Members would be responsible for formulating guidelines and presenting the proposed program to the legislature for review and coordinating statewide implementation efforts [Governor's Economy Committee '79 (G.E.C.), 1979].

Table 5 shows public school enrollments for the period from September, 1969 through September, 1986. It was prepared from information compiled by Department

3. THE FOLLOWING METHODS SHOULD BE USED IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE IF ALL DISTRICTS IN IOWA HAD TO REORGANIZE:

_____ Minimum enrollment plan: Every district with fewer than 1,000 students would have to reorganize with other districts until the new district had 1,000 students.

_____ County like plan: Each county would be a single district with various attendance centers within the county.

_____ Natural progression plan: Districts would reorganize as they see fit but newly formed districts must have a minimum enrollment of 300 students.

_____ Restructuring commission plan: A state appointed commission would set guidelines for reorganization and then reorganize school districts so that all guidelines would be met.

_____ Restructuring standards plan: All districts would be required to meet state minimum standards without sharing/telecommunications or would have to reorganize with other districts. Sharing/telecommunications could be used for offerings beyond minimums.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. RESULTS WILL BE SHARED WITH ALL DISTRICTS.

of Education officials. This table depicts the continuous decline of student enrollment each year for the entire 17 year period. Through this chart one can observe the declining enrollment trend which amounts to a total decline of 178,693 students or 27.1 percent of the peak year enrollment.

Table 6 reveals the decline in the number of public school districts from the school years 1952-53 through 1986-87. Information was gathered for this table from the annual Basic Educational Data Survey. This document is prepared annually by the Department of Education from information supplied by local district administrators. The table depicts the decline and eventual elimination of all elementary school districts in Iowa. Elementary districts were those not feeding directly into a high school. It further shows the decline in the number of public school districts over the 34 year period from 1952 to 1986.

Table 7 includes a comparative list of school district enrollments by size of districts between the 1966-67 and 1986-87 school years. This table was compiled from information gathered by personnel of the Department of Education in the annual survey of local public schools. This table points out the change in number of local districts and the general

Table 6

Number of Public School Districts in Iowa
1952-53 through 1986-87

Year	Non-High School	High School	Total
1952-53	3,722	836	4,558
1953-54	3,663	829	4,492
1954-55	3,598	819	4,417
1955-56	3,334	808	4,142
1956-57	2,903	788	3,691
1957-58	2,578	745	3,323
1958-59	2,085	694	2,779
1959-60	1,438	614	2,052
1960-61	1,013	562	1,575
1961-62	881	510	1,391
1962-63	762	469	1,231
1963-64	701	463	1,164
1964-65	639	459	1,098
1965-66	598	458	1,056
1966-67	46	455	501
1967-68	22	455	477
1968-69	5	455	460
1969-70	4	453	457
1970-71	3	453	456
1971-72	2	452	454

Table 6 (continued)

Year	Non-High School	High School	Total
1972-73	0	452	452
1973-74	0	451	451
1974-75	0	450	450
1975-76	0	450	450
1976-77	0	449	449
1977-78	0	449	449
1978-79	0	447	447
1979-80	0	445	445
1980-81	0	443	443
1981-82	0	441	441
1982-83	0	441	441
1983-84	0	439	439
1984-85	0	438	438
1985-86	0	436	436
1986-87	0	436	436

decline in enrollments of those local districts. Only districts which historically have contained more than 3,000 students have failed to change in membership over the last twenty years. There are now 75 more school districts of fewer than 500 students than there were

Table 7

Iowa School District Enrollment 1986-87 Compared to 1966-67

Number of Students	1966-67 Number of Districts	1966-67 Percent of Total	1986-87 Number of Districts	1986-87 Percent of Total	Increase/ Decrease Number of Districts	Percent Change
100-299	23	5.0	86	19.7	63	273.9
300-499	96	21.1	108	24.8	12	12.5
500-999	191	42.0	139	31.9	-52	-27.2
Total <1,000	310	68.1	333	76.4	23	7.4
1,000-1,999	87	19.1	65	14.9	-22	-25.3
2,000-2,999	33	7.3	13	3.0	-20	-60.6
3,000-plus	25	5.5	25	5.7	0	0.0
Total >1,000	145	31.9	103	23.6	-42	-29.0
Totals	455	100.0	436	100.0	-19	-4.2

in 1966 representing a change of 63.0 percent. The greatest change occurred in districts of fewer than 300 students where the number of school districts increased from 23 in 1966 to 86 in 1986. At the same time there were 42 fewer districts with enrollments between 1,000 and 3,000 in 1986 than there were in 1966. This represents a decline of 35.0 percent in school districts of this size.

Table 8 presents a comparative list of pupils and districts by enrollment size for the 1986-87 school year. This table illustrates the fact that a majority of the districts house few of Iowa's students while a few of the larger districts house most of the students in the state. Sixty-one percent of all public districts in Iowa enroll 17.8 percent of the students. At the other extreme, 7.4 percent of all districts enroll 44.8 percent of the students. School district reorganization would tend to eliminate those districts with the fewest students thereby increasing average per pupil enrollments.

Table 9 shows the ten largest school districts by geographic area and their pupil density per square mile. Although all but one of these districts contains student enrollment in excess of 1,300, they are districts that have met the time limits of transportation requirements as set by Iowa law. Those limits

Table 8

Distribution of Districts and Pupils in Iowa

Enrollment	Districts N	Districts %	Pupils N	Pupils %
Less than 250	52	11.9	10,125	2.1
250-399	89	20.4	28,538	5.9
400-599	95	21.8	46,844	9.7
600-999	97	22.2	72,465	15.1
1000-2499	71	16.4	107,580	22.4
2500-7499	24	5.5	94,967	19.7
7500-Plus	8	1.8	120,679	25.1
Totals	436	100.0	481,198	100.0

do not let elementary students ride a school bus for more than 60 minutes or a high school student more than 75 minutes each way from that student's attendance center. Districts listed in Table 9 most closely resemble those proposed under a county-like program defined in Chapter 1. Should such a plan be adopted the number of districts in the state would be reduced to 99 which would coincide with the number of counties in the state.

Table 10 shows the eleven smallest school districts by geographic area and their pupil density per square

Table 9

Ten Largest Iowa School Districts Geographically

School District	Square Miles	Average Daily Enrollment	Pupils Per Square Mile
Mount Ayr	331	698	2
Howard Winneshiek	434	1470	3
Davis County	468	1508	3
Chariton	330	1337	4
Allamakee	417	1624	4
Winterset	288	1421	5
Albia	304	1436	5
Fairfield	353	2207	6
Western Dubuque	555	3143	6
Mount Pleasant	303	2054	7

mile. Three of the districts which have enrollments more than 1,100 students are districts which spend little money to meet transportation needs because of their small geographic sizes. These districts would continue to exist, excluding the three with fewer than 1,000 students, should the minimum enrollment plan as defined in Chapter 1 be adopted by the General Assembly, but would all cease to exist should the county-like plan be adopted (see page 73).

Table 11 presents a comparison of current average

Table 10

Eleven Smallest Iowa School Districts Geographically

School District	Square Miles	Average Daily Enrollment	Pupils Per Square Mile
Bettendorf	9	4453	495
Urbandale	6	2730	455
Marion	4	1786	447
Clinton	18	5012	278
West Burlington	3	495	165
West Des Moines	37	5990	162
Ames	37	4487	121
Saydel	22	1288	59
Camamche	35	1195	34
Arnolds Park	16	214	13
Amana	32	178	6

curriculum units taught by various size school district high schools. This table illustrates the differences in educational opportunities from the smallest districts which have 38.31 average units to the largest districts by enrollment which have an average of 148.67 units or 288 percent more offerings than the smallest districts. One consideration of potential reorganization is the breadth of each district's curriculum offerings defined as the number of varied courses and sequential offerings.

Table 11

Average Curriculum Units Taught by Enrollment Category in Iowa
1985-86

		Enrollment Category						
Subject	State	0-249	250-399	400-599	600-699	1000-2499	2500-7499	7500+
Vocational	19.38	12.59	14.54	17.27	18.54	24.06	33.13	68.97
English	6.79	4.83	5.58	6.26	6.61	8.06	11.36	16.41
Fine Arts	4.99	3.23	4.07	4.81	4.76	6.01	7.80	13.93
Foreign Lan.	3.54	1.86	2.27	2.46	3.16	4.87	9.77	15.00
Health-P.E.	1.17	0.99	1.23	1.16	1.19	1.22	1.21	1.18
Mathematics	7.15	6.18	6.33	6.84	6.95	8.03	9.80	12.70
Science	5.55	4.43	4.72	5.22	5.74	6.23	8.12	9.77
Social St.	4.89	4.01	4.36	4.67	4.79	5.61	6.49	9.21
Other	0.27	0.19	0.23	0.26	0.21	0.29	0.33	1.50
Totals	53.74	38.31	43.31	48.96	51.95	64.38	88.01	148.67

Current Iowa Directions

During the 1986 Session of the General Assembly, Senate File 2175 was enacted. Section 1407, Subsection 7 of that law contained the following mandate: "The State Board of Education shall develop plans for the restructuring of school districts, area education agencies, and merged area schools, with specific emphasis on combining the area education agencies and merged area schools. The plans shall be reported to the General Assembly not later than October 1, 1987. The focus of the plans shall be to assure more productive and efficient use of limited resources, equity of geographical access to facilities, equity of educational opportunity within the state, and improved student achievement. The State Board shall consult with representatives from the local school districts, area education agencies, and merged area schools in developing the plans. The representatives shall include board members, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, associations interested in education, and representatives from the communities of various sizes." [Code of Iowa (C.I.), 1986, p.1407]. The State Board approached this mandated task by seeking methods for:

1. Improving the delivery system of education.
2. Maintaining or improving the quality of education.

3. Maximizing the use of available resources.
4. Working from and within the current framework of education in the state.

In response to the mandate, the State Board appointed a 22 member panel of advisors to advise it in developing the restructuring plans. The advisors were selected from lists of recommendations from the following state wide organizations:

1. The Iowa State Education Association.
2. The Iowa Association of School Boards.
3. The Iowa Association of School Administrators.
4. The Educational Administrators of Iowa.
5. The Iowa Association of Area Education Agency Administrators.
6. The Iowa Council of Area Education Agency Boards.
7. The Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.
8. The Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers.
9. The Iowa Association of Business and Industry.
10. The Iowa Federation of Labor.
11. The Iowa Farm Bureau Association.

These associations were each asked to provide nine names for consideration; three each representing small, medium, and large size districts. From these lists three panel members were chosen from each association such that regional and size balances were achieved. In addition, there were seven ex-officio members of the panel representing the executive and legislative branches of

government as well as the State Board.

There were five plans which emerged from this process including four panel originated plans and one minority opinion plan. Included are the following plans:

1. A Minimum Enrollment Plan.
2. A County-like School System Plan.
3. A Natural Progression Plan.
4. A Restructuring Commission (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).
5. A Restructuring Standards Plan (Scott, 1987).

A Minimum Enrollment Plan. From the 1950's to the present time, a proposed school district or district which would be formed through the process of reorganization had to have a minimum of 300 students, kindergarten through grade twelve. This was basically a one unit school. The State Board recommended that a minimum of 1,000 students be the number necessary for a new district and that all school districts be required to have that minimum enrollment by 1992. For the majority of students in districts under 1,000 enrollment, the impact of this plan would be primarily felt at the secondary level. The basic implications of the 1,000 minimum enrollment figure were that a school district of that size would ensure a diversity of course

offerings, enhance student competition, provide minimum but efficient use of financial and human resources, and make it easier to provide an appropriate program for each child. The number and location of specific attendance centers would be left to local discretion, although the anticipated number of secondary attendance centers would be approximately one-half the existing number. Currently, there are 333 districts below 1,000 enrollment. This represents about 76 percent of the districts in existence. The specifics of the impact on transportation would not be known prior to determining actual mergers between and among districts (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

A County-like School System Plan. The State Board recommended that all public school districts be restructured into county-like units, effective in 1992. Current school district lines could be used in forming the boundaries of county-like units. This plan would call for 99 school districts. Program offerings for students would be maximized under the county-like approach. All districts in the state except for two would have an enrollment of at least 1,000 students. With this enrollment base, sufficient funds and staff would be available to ensure program offerings with some breadth. The number of elementary attendance centers would not change as drastically as would the number of secondary centers. However, there would be fewer elementary attendance centers, and there

could be at least one-hundred fewer high school buildings. The administrative structure of school districts would change to reflect the administration of more staff, more attendance centers, and the use of staff to manage selected programs or to specialize in certain areas. It is assumed that each district would have a superintendent and each attendance center would have a principal. The number of principals would be expected to increase slightly. Most districts would employ a business manager as well as specialists in areas such as curriculum and personnel. Almost all districts in the state would be affected. Transportation would clearly be an issue in the feasibility or perceived feasibility of having county-like units (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

The Natural Progression Plan. Even though the pace of school district reorganization has been slow in recent years, there has been some activity. This interest appears to be spurred by the following factors: declining enrollments, scarce financial resources, teacher shortages in some areas, and state statutes which allow a variety of sharing possibilities. The State Board recommended that no major legislation be considered that could force drastic restructuring of local school districts. Rather, the State Board believes that a number of current incentives are in place and that other factors are operational to the degree that a natural progression toward restructuring will continue and increase in volume during the next

several years. Coupling the new standards, the accreditation process, and the financing of schools may produce results independent of any direct legislative intervention. Currently local boards are engaging in activities that substantiate the natural progression plan. Whole grade sharing, which is a form of reorganization, if not a prelude to reorganization, has geometrically increased over the past three years (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

A Restructuring Commission Plan. For a variety of reasons, the General Assembly has chosen not to enact laws that would force restructuring of school districts. In recognition of this past history, the State Board recommended that a School District Restructuring Commission be established composed of lay leaders, legislators, and professional educators broadly representative of the state. This commission should be authorized to do the following:

1. Establish preliminary guidelines for the development of desirable local school districts.
2. Provide an opportunity for school districts to express their organizational desires in terms of the preliminary guidelines established by the commission.
3. Following this school district input, develop criteria and guidelines for reorganization of local school districts on a statewide basis.
4. Seek statutory authority to proceed with the proposed school district structure.
5. Act as a commission of appeal to settle disputes that arise during the implementation of school district restructuring.

All school districts would be restructured along the lines

set forth in the criteria and guidelines by 1992. The commission would cease to exist by that date (I.S.R.P.A., 1987).

The Restructuring-standards Based Plan. All existing school districts would be required to meet state minimum standards by July 1, 1992, using existing district resources. Students could not be transported across existing school boundaries for sharing purposes in order to meet minimum standards. Certified teachers could be shared with other districts or hired on a part time basis to meet minimum standards but would have to provide daily in-class on-site instruction. Television satellite classes would not be acceptable alternatives for meeting minimum standards. Local districts which could not meet the obligations of this plan due to financial constraints, could pass an enrichment tax to provide necessary additional funding. Local districts which could not meet the obligations of this plan and which chose not to pass an enrichment tax would be required to dissolve and merge with another district meeting the prescribed standards within one year using existing reorganization methods. Districts could continue to share students to meet educational needs above and beyond the minimum standards. Districts could continue to utilize television satellite classes to enhance educational opportunities above and beyond the minimum standards. This proposal would equalize education across the state in that every child would be guaranteed access to a basic education in his/her own district with real

teachers in a regular classroom setting. Each school district would have the opportunity to make its own decision about keeping the school in its own community. Districts on a state wide level would not be required to provide funds to keep less efficient districts in operation. Opportunities for sharing and satellite courses would continue to exist giving unlimited availability of educational experiences to Iowa's young people. This proposal would probably provide a more palatable alternative to legislators as the commitment to local control remains a strong fixation (Scott, 1987).

Summary

In this chapter, a review of related literature was presented; national perspectives were presented which revealed that some studies demonstrate a need for reorganization of small inefficient school districts while others point out that individual high schools of more than 1,500 enrollment tend to produce students with lower academic achievement and increased dropout rates. Actions taken by the Iowa General Assembly since the inception of public schools in Iowa was presented. Iowa perspectives were reviewed tracing the history of reorganization in Iowa. The final section of Chapter 2 showed the current direction of school district reorganization in Iowa and included a description of each of the five reorganization plans which will

be considered by the 1989 Iowa General Assembly; and upon which the focus of this study is centered.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Design of the Study

This study was conducted to determine attitudes of local school board members toward school district reorganization concepts, as these are influenced by attitudes of school district patrons. To accomplish this, a questionnaire identifying various reorganization concepts currently under consideration in Iowa was developed and distributed to all school board members in Iowa.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher, reviewed by his major advisor, and reviewed for face validity by Guy Ghan, Consultant for School Administration with the Department of Education; and Ted Davidson, Executive Director of the Iowa Association of School Boards. Mr. Ghan is the Department of Education consultant in the state for school district reorganization. Dr. Davidson endorsed the study which encouraged greater local school board member response. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final form of the questionnaire which was then mailed to all local public school board members in Iowa.

Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into four separate categories:

1. General information.
2. Reasons for opposition to reorganization.
3. Existing reorganization method choice.
4. Board member attitudes relative to future reorganization alternatives.
    - A. Identification of the agency which should determine reorganization.
    - B. Identification of factors most significant to consider in reorganization.
    - C. Preferred method of reorganization currently under consideration.

The general information part was designed to identify various kindergarten through grade twelve district enrollments, determine board service longevity, and identify respondents by school district and area education agency.

The second section was designed to identify specified reasons most often encountered by school board members as justification for not reorganizing school districts. This section involved the use of a "yes" or "no" format with no particular value placed on the strength of the "yes" or "no" response.

The third section was a simple choice question between the two methods of reorganization currently allowed by Iowa law.

The last section dealt with attitudes toward future reorganization possibilities and was broken into three sub-sections. Sub-section One involved a rank ordering by board members of which public entity should determine reorganization for Iowa's schools. Sub-section Two involved a rank ordering of factors that should receive priority in determining reorganization. Sub-section Three presented current identified reorganization possibilities in the rank order method which will be given consideration during the 1989 legislative session.

The composite package, including the covering letter of instructions, was three pages in length. The writer attempted to follow Parten's suggestions as to the proper length for a questionnaire, ". . . as short as possible to get all the information needed by the survey." (Parten, 1950, p.385). The package was also developed with Parten's suggestion to avoid a complicated or cluttered look in hopes that respondents would react more readily to the questions asked.

Population

Every school board member of every local public school district in the state of Iowa was included in the population surveyed. All members of the population were sent questionnaires to complete in order to eliminate potentially erroneous conclusions which

could be encountered from random sampling. Approximately 2,300 questionnaires were sent to the school board members.

The chief administrator of each area education agency was called on the telephone to explain the nature of the study, seek support for it, and ask assistance in distributing and collecting survey materials. All fifteen AEA administrators were supportive and were willing to give substantial assistance in the distribution and collection of the materials.

Packets of materials were mailed to each AEA administrator. A letter was included which explained exactly the responsibility of the administrator and how that responsibility was to be completed (see Appendix A). Also included in the materials were the packets for the superintendent and school board members of each local public school district in the AEA.

Included with each superintendent's packet of materials was a letter explaining the nature of the study, asking for support, and requesting assistance in the distribution of the questionnaires to the individual board members at the first regular board meeting of November, 1987 (see Appendix B).

At the first school board meeting of November superintendents distributed individual board member packets. Contained in each packet was a letter

explaining the purpose of the study and asking board members to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix C). Also included was a survey document (see Appendix D). Board members were asked to complete the questionnaire at the board meeting but to do so independently and without consulting other board members.

Each superintendent then sent the collected questionnaires to the administrator of each district's respective area education agency. Once school district superintendents had returned responses, or by December 1, 1987, all questionnaires which had been returned to the administrator of each AEA were then mailed to the researcher for analysis.

Superintendents of school districts which had no board members respond to the questionnaire were contacted by phone and asked to encourage additional participation by their board members. No other follow-up measures were used.

Treatment of the Data

Information for questionnaires received from local school district boards of directors is summarized in Chapter 4. Data for the various school board members were classified according to:

1. General background information about respondents.
2. Reasons school board members perceive people oppose school district reorganization.

3. Preferable choices using existing reorganization methods.

4. Consideration of factors affecting future reorganization possibilities.

   A. Identification of the agency perceived as most appropriate to determine school district reorganization.

   B. Identification of those single factors most important in determining reorganization.

   C. Identification of the preferred method of reorganization currently under consideration by the General Assembly.

Appropriate statistical analyses were used to determine the differences between the various sub-groups as identified in the questionnaire.

Data were broken down into cells each containing a certain number of responses or frequencies. The Chi-square statistical test of significance was used to analyze the data. The level of significance considered acceptable for rejection of each null hypothesis was 0.05. Tables which show levels of significance between 0.0000 and 0.0500 have a significant level of difference of response to the affected question and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Data were further analyzed in terms of each individual cell in comparison with all other cells. Adjusted residuals determined the level of significance of each individual cell at the 0.05 level. Adjusted residuals' significance levels were determined by

dividing the desired level of significance 0.025 for a two-tailed test by the number of cells resulting in a normal distribution factor which was then converted to a z score above which, or if negative, below which significance of an individual cell was identified. Cells which were considered significant were placed in enclosed boxes.

The Friedman Two-way Analysis of Variance Test was used to determine significance at the 0.05 level when comparing all items which were rank ordered.

The overall design of this research was to determine attitudes of local school board members toward reorganization concepts. This was done by surveying all school board members of Iowa public school districts; grouping those board members by size, years of service, and area education agency. Relationships were explored in the areas of reasons for opposition to school district reorganization, determining most popular current methods of reorganization, and evaluating attitudes toward possible furture reorganization plans and considerations.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine attitudes of Iowa public school district board members concerning public school district reorganization.

Responses to a survey instrument were used to produce an analysis of board members' attitudes toward various aspects of school district reorganization. The central issues considered in the survey instrument included the following:

1. Identification of reasons board members perceive school district patrons oppose reorganization.
2. Selection of a preferable method of reorganization given those methods currently allowed by Iowa law.
3. Identification of the governmental unit most preferred to determine school district reorganization.
4. Determination of the factors from most significant to least significant in developing reorganization plans.
5. An analysis of board members' opinions of the

five methods of reorganization currently being considered as potential alternative reorganization plans by the Iowa General Assembly.

Survey responses were first analyzed by size of school district enrollment to determine if there was a difference in responses between school districts of various enrollment sizes. Sizes ranged from 0-300, 301-600, 601-1,000, 1,001-1,500, 1,501-2,000, 2,001-3,000, and 3,001-plus.

Secondly, the survey was analyzed according to the number of years of experience of individual board members. The purpose of this analysis was to determine if there was a difference in the type of response between board members with different amounts of longevity as public school board members. The experience categories ranged from 0-3.0 years, 3.1-6.0 years, 6.1-9.0 years, 9.1-12.0 years, 12.1-15.0 years, and 15.1 years and longer.

Finally, survey responses were analyzed by geographic region as defined by the areas served by the 15 area education agencies. The purpose of this analysis was to determine if respondents differred from one area to another.

Survey Response

Board members' results were recorded by school district and area education agency. Twenty-three

hundred surveys were mailed which represented 100 percent of all Iowa public school district board members; 1,456 responses were received (64.2 percent).

There were 436 school districts or 100 percent of all Iowa public school districts surveyed. Board members responded from 333 school districts (76.4 percent). Table 12 depicts the response level by area education agency.

Table 12

Survey Response of Schools by Area Education Agency (AEA)

AEA*	Returned	Not Returned	Return Percent
1	19	7	73.1
2	23	5	82.1
3	19	6	76.0
4	18	1	94.7
5	30	15	66.7
6	17	4	81.0
7	24	2	92.3
9	14	10	58.3
10	26	13	66.7
11	50	11	82.0
12	20	8	71.4
13	25	8	75.8
14	18	4	81.8
15	19	7	73.1
16	11	2	84.6
Total	333	103	76.4

* There is no AEA 8.

Reasons for Opposition to Reorganization

Survey responses are reported as percentages of positive or yes, answers to reasons identified as causing opposition to school district reorganization. Figure 1 is a summary of responses of reasons given for opposing school district reorganization. The four reasons selected most often included:

1. Children would live too far from their attendance center.
2. The town would die if the school district were to reorganize.
3. Existing facilities would be wasted.
4. Transportation would be too complicated.

Present Methods of Reorganization

Survey responses are reported according to the two methods currently allowed by Iowa law; the dissolution method and the petition method.

Table 13 shows that 62.3 percent of the respondents prefer the petition method of reorganization while 37.7 percent prefer the dissolution method. No school district in Iowa has yet reorganized itself through the dissolution process. Board members from school districts between 1,001-1,500 enrollments found the dissolution method more favorable than all other sizes of public school districts. However, board members

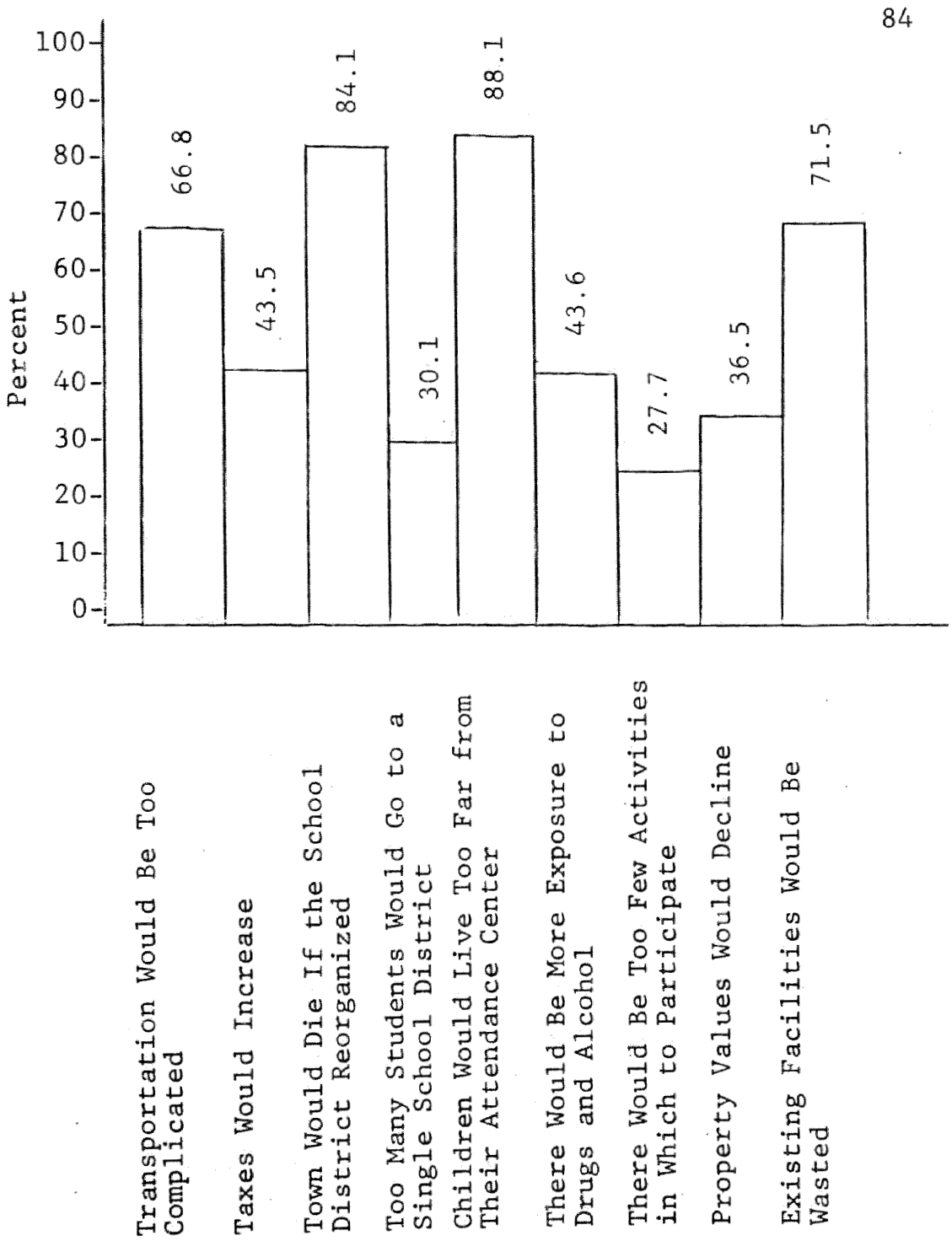

Figure 1

Percentage of Yes Responses to Reasons for Opposition to School District Reorganization

Table 13

Preference by Size of School District for the Dissolution Versus Petition Method of School District Reorganization

Enrollment

COUNT / EXP VAL / COL PCT / RESIDUAL / STD RES / ADJ RES	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	101 96.5 39.5% 4.5 .5 .6	155 187.0 31.3% -32.0 -2.3 -3.6	114 117.3 36.7% -3.3 -.3 -.4	82 58.1 53.2% 23.9 3.1 4.2	42 35.1 45.2% 6.9 1.2 1.5	29 24.5 44.6% 4.5 .9 1.2	29 33.6 32.6% -4.6 -.8 -1.0	552 37.7%
2	155 159.5 60.5% -4.5 -.4 -.6	341 309.0 68.8% 32.0 1.8 3.6	197 193.7 63.3% 3.3 .2 .4	72 95.9 46.8% -23.9 -2.4 -4.2	51 57.9 54.8% -6.9 -.9 -1.5	36 40.5 55.4% -4.5 -.7 -1.2	60 55.4 67.4% 4.6 .6 1.0	912 62.3%
COLUMN TOTAL	256 17.5%	496 33.9%	311 21.2%	154 10.5%	93 6.4%	65 4.4%	89 6.1%	1464 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
29.63077	6	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 2.9 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 14 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

from districts with enrollments between 301-600 found this method less favorable than all other size districts.

Table 14 compares the two methods of present school district reorganization possibilities according to school board members' years of experience as board members. There was no difference between the various levels of experience of school board members and their preference of reorganization method when given these two alternatives.

Table 14

Preference by School Board Member Experience for the Dissolution Versus Petition Method of School District Reorganization

Experience

COUNT / EXP VAL / COL PCT / RESIDUAL / STD RES / ADJ RES	0-3.0 (0)	3.1-6.0 (1)	6.1-9.0 (2)	9.1-12.0 (3)	12.1-15.0 (4)	15.1-PLUS (5)	ROW TOTAL
1	0 .4 .0% -.4 -.6 -.8	249 251.5 37.3% -2.5 -.2 -.3	167 163.6 38.5% 3.4 .3 .4	81 76.9 39.7% 4.1 .5 .6	27 33.6 30.3% -6.6 -1.1 -1.5	18 17.3 39.1% .7 .2 .2	10 8.7 43.5% 1.3 .5 .6	552 37.7%
2	1 .6 100.0% .4 .5 .8	418 415.5 62.7% 2.5 .1 .3	267 270.4 61.5% -3.4 -.2 -.4	123 127.1 60.3% -4.1 -.4 -.6	62 55.4 69.7% 6.6 .9 1.5	28 28.7 60.9% -.7 -.1 -.2	13 14.3 56.5% -1.3 -.4 -.6	912 62.3%
COLUMN TOTAL	1 .1%	667 45.6%	434 29.6%	204 13.9%	89 6.1%	46 3.1%	23 1.6%	1464 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
3.52654	6	0.7404

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 2.9 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 14 cells); no cells are significantly different.

Table 15 compares the two present methods of school district reorganization allowed by Iowa law according to the 15 area education agencies. Only in AEA 3 was any difference in school board members' attitudes noted concerning the two methods. AEAs 13 and 14 were the only agencies that had board members who supported the dissolution method more that the petition method of reorganization.

Table 15

Preference by Area Education Agency for the Dissolution Versus Petition Method of School District Reorganization

Area Education Agency

COUNT / EXP VAL / COL PCT / RESIDUAL / STD RES / ADJ RES	AEA 1	AEA 2	AEA 3	AEA 4	AEA 5	AEA 6	AEA 7	AEA 9
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	30 30.2 37.5% -.2 .0 .0	40 40.7 37.0% -.7 -.1 -.1	47 32.8 54.0% 14.2 2.5 3.2	23 28.7 30.3% -5.7 -1.1 -1.4	49 44.9 41.2% 4.1 .6 .8	19 32.4 22.1% -13.4 -2.4 -3.1	30 41.9 27.0% -11.9 -1.8 -2.4	25 24.1 39.1% .9 .2 .2
2	50 49.8 62.5% .2 .0 .0	68 67.3 63.0% .7 .1 .1	40 54.2 46.0% -14.2 -1.9 -3.2	53 47.3 69.7% 5.7 .8 1.4	70 74.1 58.8% -4.1 -.5 -.8	67 53.6 77.9% 13.4 1.8 3.1	81 69.1 73.0% 11.9 1.4 2.4	39 39.9 60.9% -.9 -.1 -.2
COLUMN TOTAL	80 5.5%	108 7.4%	87 5.9%	76 5.2%	119 8.1%	86 5.9%	111 7.6%	64 4.4%

COUNT / EXP VAL / COL PCT / RESIDUAL / STD RES / ADJ RES	AEA 10	AEA 11	AEA 12	AEA 13	AEA 14	AEA 15	AEA 16	ROW TOTAL
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1	32 42.2 28.6% -10.2 -1.6 -2.1	76 83.0 34.5% -7.0 -.8 -1.0	27 26.0 39.1% 1.0 .2 .3	50 46.0 41.0% 4.0 .6 .8	40 29.0 51.9% 11.0 2.0 2.6	44 31.7 52.4% 12.3 2.2 2.9	19 18.1 39.6% .9 .2 .3	552 37.7%
2	80 69.8 71.4% 10.2 1.2 2.1	144 137.0 65.5% 7.0 .6 1.0	42 43.0 60.9% -1.0 -.2 -.3	72 76.0 59.0% -4.0 -.5 -.8	37 48.0 48.1% -11.0 -1.6 -2.6	40 52.3 47.6% -12.3 -1.7 -2.9	29 29.9 60.4% -.9 -.2 -.3	912 62.3%
COLUMN TOTAL	112 7.7%	220 15.0%	69 4.7%	122 8.3%	77 5.3%	84 5.7%	48 3.3%	1464 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
48.25794	14	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 30 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

It is apparent that although school board members generally (62.3 percent) prefer the petition method of school district reorganization, which originates with the citizenry, over the dissolution method, which originates with the local school board, there is no relationship between size of districts, experience of board members, or geographic location of the area education agency and choice of either method given.

Agency Responsible for Reorganization

Survey respondents were asked to rank order their preferences for which governmental agencies should determine school district reorganization. A rank of 1 indicated first choice, a rank of 2 second choice, a rank of 3 third choice, and a rank of 4 fourth choice.

Figure 2 is a summary of the mean ranks of all respondents. The Friedman two-way analysis of variance test which was applied assumes equal differences between ranked choices which in reality do not exist. However, significant differences are evident with a strong preference for any reorganization method or plan to be completed by the local district. Almost equal to that support is the strength of the opposition to having the legislature determine reorganization methods. The average rank score on a four point scale was 1.27 for local district determination and 3.37 for legislative reorganization determination.

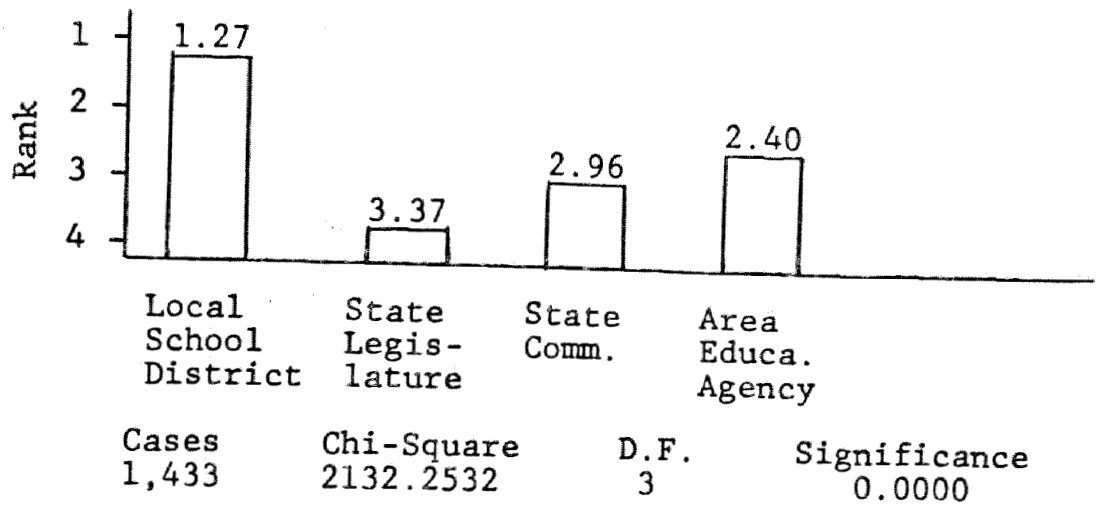

Figure 2

Average Rank Order Choices of All School Board Members for Determining Which Agency Should Determine Future School District Reorganization

Figure 3 shows that 86.3 percent of all respondents felt that any school district reorganization should be determined by the local district when given the choices of reorganization by local district, Legislature, a state appointed commission, or area education agency. Such support left only 13.7 percent of the respondents to select first choices from the other three identified alternatives.

Table 16 identifies the 14 cells of observed differences in school board members' attitudes toward what agency should determine reorganization. Nearly 95 percent of board members from school districts ranging in size from 0-600 in enrollment felt that local boards should determine school district

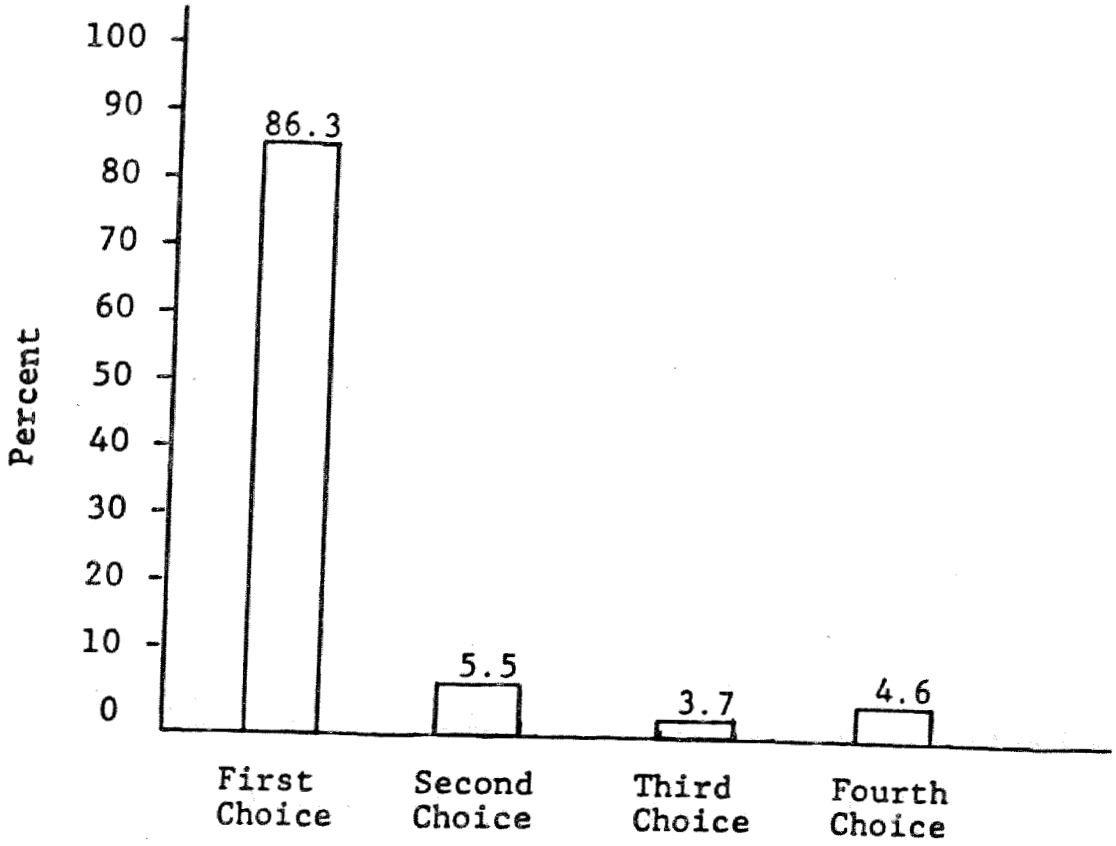

Figure 3

Percentage of Respondents Who Chose School District Reorganization by the Local School District as a First, Second, Third, or Fourth Choice

reorganization while that percentage dropped to 65.6 percent for board members from school districts with enrollments greater than 2,000 students.

As shown in Figure 4, respondents chose the Legislature as the least acceptable agency to perform reorganization responsibilities. Only 5.8 percent of all respondents supported reorganization by the Legislature while 60.6 percent felt it was the least

Table 16

Selection of Reorganization Methods by the Local District Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	244 222.5 94.6% 21.5 1.4 4.3	466 426.1 94.3% 39.9 1.9 6.4	264 267.4 85.2% -3.4 -.2 -.6	117 132.8 76.0% -15.8 -1.4 -3.9	71 81.9 74.7% -10.9 -1.2 -3.4	43 54.3 68.3% -11.3 -1.5 -4.2	56 75.9 63.6% -19.9 -2.3 -6.4	1261 86.3%
2	3 14.1 1.2% -11.1 -3.0 -3.4	18 27.0 3.6% -9.0 -1.7 -2.2	25 17.0 8.1% 8.0 2.0 2.3	19 8.4 12.3% 10.6 3.6 4.0	5 5.2 5.3% -.2 -.1 -.1	3 3.4 4.8% -.4 -.2 -.3	7 4.8 8.0% 2.2 1.0 1.1	80 5.5%
3	6 9.5 2.3% -3.5 -1.1 -1.3	5 18.2 1.0% -13.2 -3.1 -3.9	9 11.5 2.9% -2.5 -.7 -.8	7 5.7 4.5% 1.3 .6 .6	13 3.5 13.7% 9.5 5.1 5.3	4 2.3 6.3% 1.7 1.1 1.1	10 3.3 11.4% 6.7 3.7 3.9	54 3.7%
4	5 11.8 1.9% -6.8 -2.0 -2.2	5 22.6 1.0% -17.6 -3.7 -4.7	12 14.2 3.9% -2.2 -.6 -.7	11 7.1 7.1% 3.9 1.5 1.6	6 4.4 6.3% 1.6 .8 .8	13 2.9 20.6% 10.1 6.0 6.2	15 4.0 17.0% 11.0 5.5 5.8	67 4.6%
COLUMN TOTAL	258 17.6%	494 33.8%	310 21.2%	154 10.5%	95 6.5%	63 4.3%	88 6.0%	1462 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
185.42612	18	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.1 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 28 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

favorite alternative of the four presented for consideration.

Table 17 identifies the areas of difference in school board member support for reorganization by the Legislature according to school district enrollments. Only 2.4 percent of the respondents from the smallest

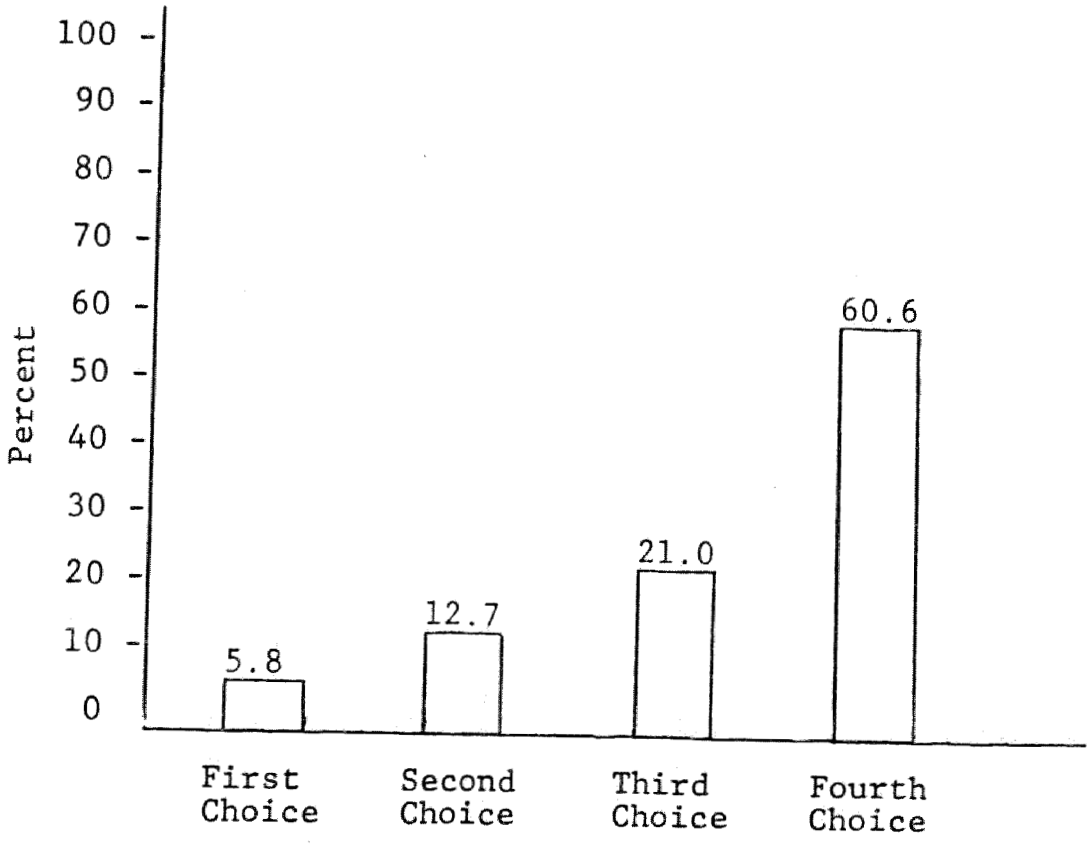

Figure 4

Percentage of Respondents Who Chose School District Reorganization by the Legislature as a First, Second, Third, or Fourth Choice

enrollment school districts (0-600) approved of this as the best method while 14.0 percent of the largest enrollment districts (2,000-plus) found such a method as the best possible alternative from those given.

There was no difference between groups when comparing alternative choices of agencies to determine school district reorganization and length of experience of individual board members.

No differences could be found based on respondents' geographic location as determined by area education

Table 17

Selection of Reorganization by the Legislature Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	9 14.6 3.6% -5.6 -1.5 -1.7	9 28.0 1.9% -19.0 -3.6 -4.5	23 17.5 7.6% 5.5 1.3 1.5	13 8.7 8.6% 4.3 1.4 1.6	8 5.5 8.4% 2.5 1.1 1.1	8 3.6 12.7% 4.4 2.3 2.4	13 5.0 14.9% 8.0 3.6 3.8	83 5.8%
2	32 32.1 12.6% -.1 .0 .0	51 61.3 10.5% -10.3 -1.3 -1.7	24 38.4 7.9% -14.4 -2.3 -2.8	19 19.1 12.6% -.1 .0 .0	19 12.0 20.0% 7.0 2.0 2.2	14 8.0 22.2% 6.0 2.1 2.3	23 11.0 26.4% 12.0 3.6 4.0	182 12.7%
3	48 53.0 19.0% -5.0 -.7 -.9	112 101.5 23.1% 10.5 1.0 1.4	54 63.5 17.8% -9.5 -1.2 -1.5	23 31.7 15.2% -8.7 -1.5 -1.8	30 19.9 31.6% 10.1 2.3 2.6	17 13.2 27.0% 3.8 1.0 1.2	17 18.2 19.5% -1.2 -.3 -.3	301 21.0%
4	164 153.3 64.8% 10.7 .9 1.5	312 293.2 64.5% 18.8 1.1 2.1	202 183.6 66.7% 18.4 1.4 2.4	96 91.5 63.6% 4.5 .5 .8	38 57.6 40.0% -19.6 -2.6 -4.2	24 38.2 38.1% -14.2 -2.3 -3.7	34 52.7 39.1% -18.7 -2.6 -4.2	870 60.6%
COLUMN TOTAL	253 17.6%	484 33.7%	303 21.1%	151 10.5%	95 6.6%	63 4.4%	87 6.1%	1436 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significant
100.76192	18	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.1 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 28 cell); cells significantly different are enclosed.

agency. Respondents from AEA 7 (94.6 percent), AEA 11 (91.3 percent), and AEA 1 (91.3 percent) showed the strongest support for the local district as the reorganizing agency concept. However, respondents from AEA 14

(77.4 percent) and AEA 15 (76.6 percent) had the lowest rates of support yet still expressed positive support. Respondents from AEA 13 and AEA 15 represent 15 of the 21 southern two tiers of Iowa counties and supported reorganization by the Legislature most favorably at 13.4 percent and 21.7 percent respectively. AEA 6 respondents supported the concept of reorganizing local districts by the area education agency at the highest rate (7.6 percent).

The study revealed that school board members prefer most strongly reorganization of public schools at the local level (86.3 percent) if that reorganization is to take place and if the alternative choices are by legislative action, legislative appointed commission, or AEA. Districts ranging from 0-300 supported the local control choice at a 96.4 percent rate while those ranging above 3,000 in enrollment supported the local control choice at a 63.6 percent rate.

Factors to Consider in School District Reorganization

Respondents were asked to rank preferences of nine given considerations influencing school district reorganization with a rank of 1 highest, 2 second highest, and 9 the lowest such that a rank order continuum was created. Such ratings only allow for rank ordering and do not imply which may or may not be important from a positive or negative point of view. Participants were given

an opportunity to express other factors which should be considered in school district reorganization. However, no item was mentioned for consideration by more than three respondents from a total of 1,456 returned surveys.

Figure 5 is a summary of the mean ranks of all respondents who ranked the nine identified factors which should be considered in reorganizing Iowa's public school districts. The Friedman Two-way Analysis of Variance Test applied assumes equal differences which do not exist between ranked factors for these data. However, differences do exist as evidenced by the average rankings ranging from 3.11 to 6.87. There were two factors which ranked considerably higher than all others. Reorganizing school districts, according to the research, should be done first by considering the ability to meet state minimum standards (3.11) and then based on the breadth of instructional offerings (3.42). Three factors emerged as less significant than all others including:

1. Taxable valuation of the district (6.87).
2. Number of district professional staff (6.44).
3. Square miles in the district (6.29).

Figure 6 identifies by percentage the number of respondents who selected each alternative as a first choice. Because not all respondents ranked all nine

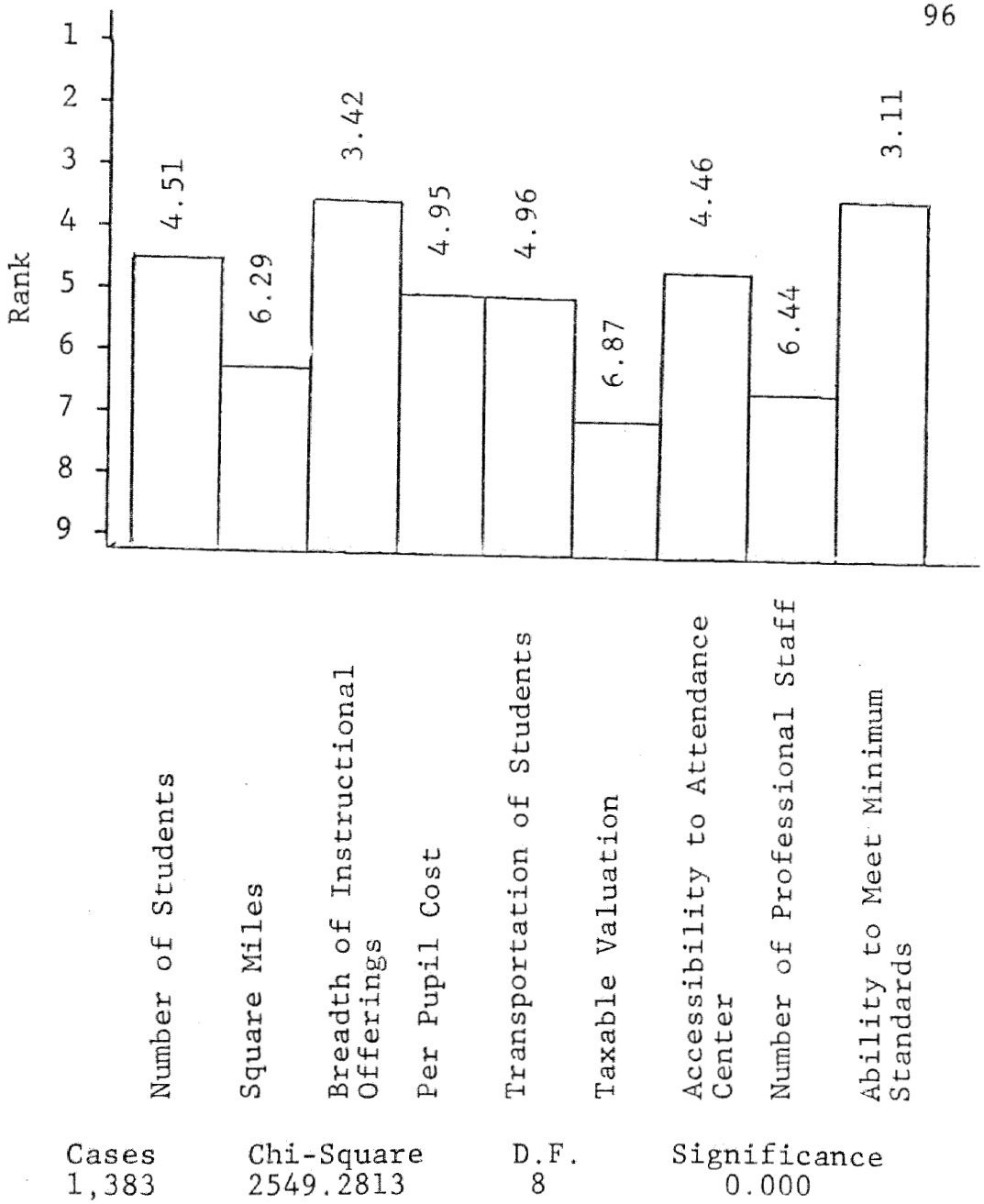

Figure 5

Average Rank Order of Factors to Consider When Determining School District Reorganization

alternatives, percentages total slightly more than 100 percent. The ability to meet state standards (39.3 percent) has 15.1 more percentage points than any other factor. Breadth of instructional offering (24.2 percent) and

number of students (16.7 percent) are also identified more often than chance would allow. Categories given little support by board members as primary choices as factors which should be considered when reorganizing the public schools include taxable valuation (0.4 percent), number of professional staff (0.8 percent), transportation of students (3.5 percent), per pupil cost (4.3 percent), and square miles in the district (4.4 percent).

Figure 7 identifies by percentage the number of respondents who selected each of the nine alternatives as one of the first three choices. Each column will have a total which must range between 0 and 100. Again, the district's ability to meet state minimum standards (68.1 percent) and the breadth of instructional offerings (60.3 percent) are most often identified as key factors to consider in school district reorganization. Taxable valuation (7.1 percent), number of professional staff (13.2 percent), and square miles in the district (17.7 percent) have little support from board members as factors to consider as impacting reorganization. Other factors given some support include the number of students in the district (42.6 percent), accessibility to the attendance center (36.7 percent), per pupil cost (30.3 percent), and transportation of students (27.9 percent).

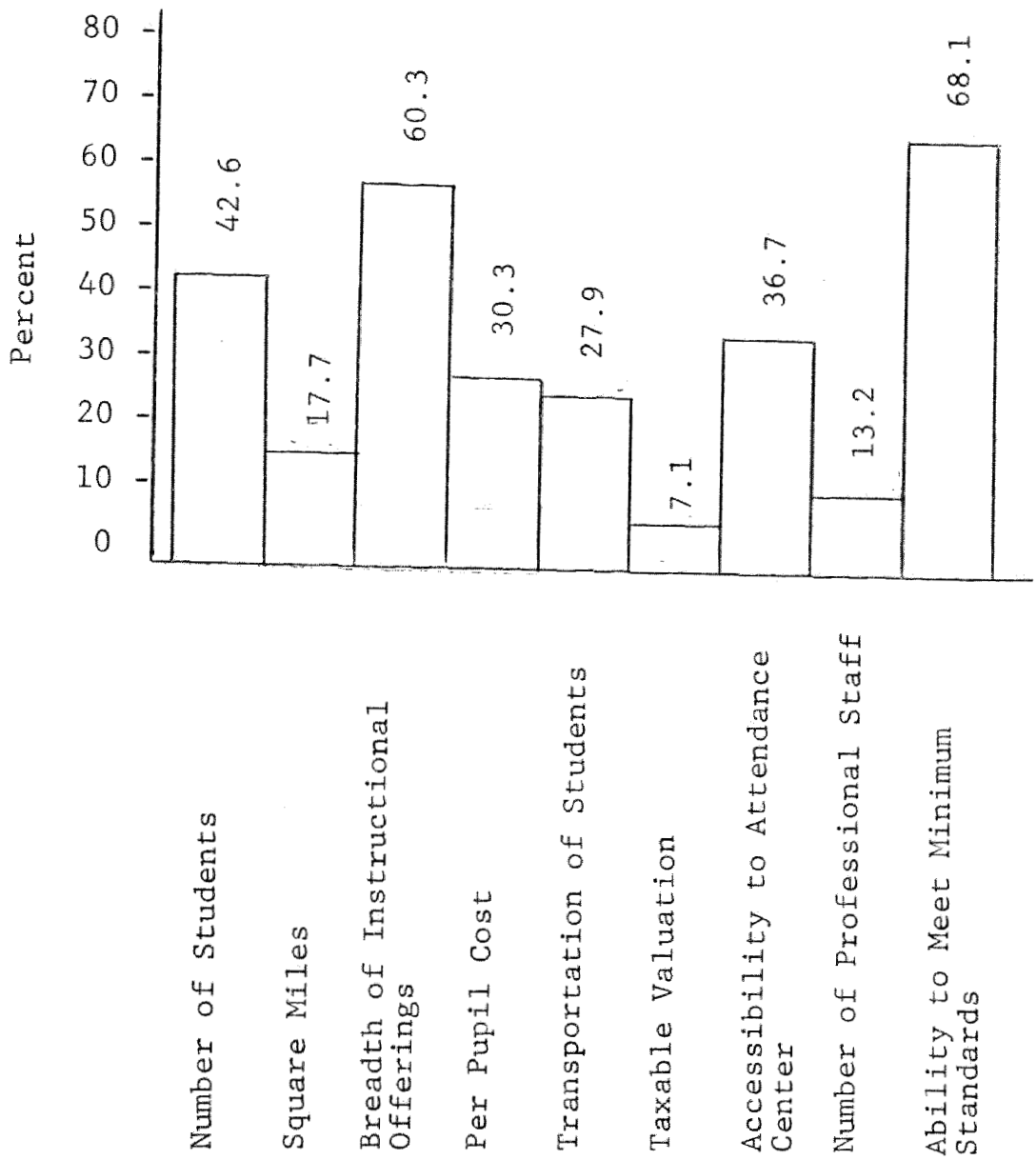

Figure 7

Percentage of Times Each Alternative Was Selected As the First, Second, or Third Factor to Consider in Reorganization

Although differences were noted, they were not significant indicating that this portion of the survey may be representative of board members as a whole throughout the state. Of the school board members who selected

the ability to meet minimum standards (39.3 percent) as the primary determining factor for school district reorganization, board members from districts of enrollment size 301-600 supported this concept at the highest rate (41.4 percent) while board members of the lowest rate (33.7 percent) came from districts of more than 3,000 enrollment. This difference is statistically insignificant. School board members who selected breadth of instructional program as the primary choice (24.2 percent) ranged in primary support level by enrollment size from 1,001-1,500 (28.4 percent) to 2,001-3,000 (9.7 percent). Board members who had between 12.1 and 15.0 years experience rated the ability to meet state minimum standards highest (43.5 percent), while board members with more than 15.0 years of experience rated it as their primary choice 10.0 percent of the time. Breadth of instructional offerings was supported as a primary choice most often by board members who had 9.1-12.0 years of experience (32.5 percent), while board members with 12.1-15.0 years of experience selected this same alternative as the primary choice at a 15.9 percent level. Board members in Area Education Agency 1 chose the ability to meet state minimum standards as the primary alternative most often (47.4 percent) while those from Area Education Agency 2 made the same choice 32.7 percent of the

Breadth of instructional offerings was selected as the primary choice most often by board members from Area Education Agency 7 (30.5 percent) and least often by board members from Area Education Agencies 1 and 15 at a rate of 15.6 percent.

Preferred Methods of School District Reorganization

Five potential methods of school district reorganization developed from the year long study of the panel of advisors to the Iowa State Board of Education were presented for consideration to all survey recipients. Participants were asked to rank order their preferences of those five alternatives. A rank of 1 indicated the choice most strongly supported, a rank of 2 the second best choice, and so on, with a rank of 5 equalling the least preferred choice of those given. The reader should understand that only choices prepared by the researcher were ranked and given consideration. Of the 1,416 respondents to this survey question, three responded that no alternative was acceptable and none suggested that any additional alternative should be considered. However, such alternatives were not in any way encouraged.

Figure 8 is a summary of the mean ranks of all respondents. The Friedman Two-way Analysis of Variance Test applied assumes equal differences between ranked

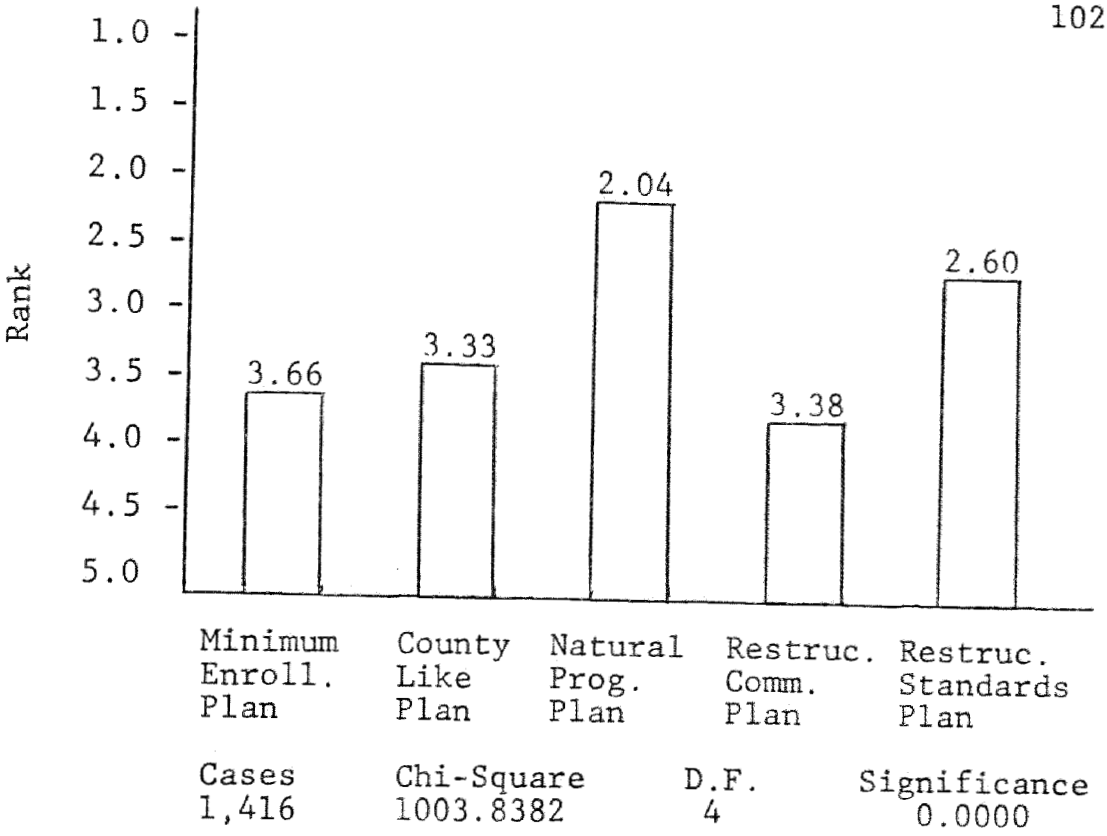

Figure 8

Average Rank Order of Specific Reorganization Plans

factors. Equal differences do not exist here. However, mean differences do exist as shown by the average rankings ranging from 2.04 to 3.66 in a five item rank order list Two alternatives emerged as much preferred over the other three. Alternatives which generated support included the natural progression plan (2.04) and the restructuring standards plan (2.60). Those plans which generated little support included the minimum enrollment plan (3.66), the restructuring commission plan (3.38), and the county-like plan (3.33).

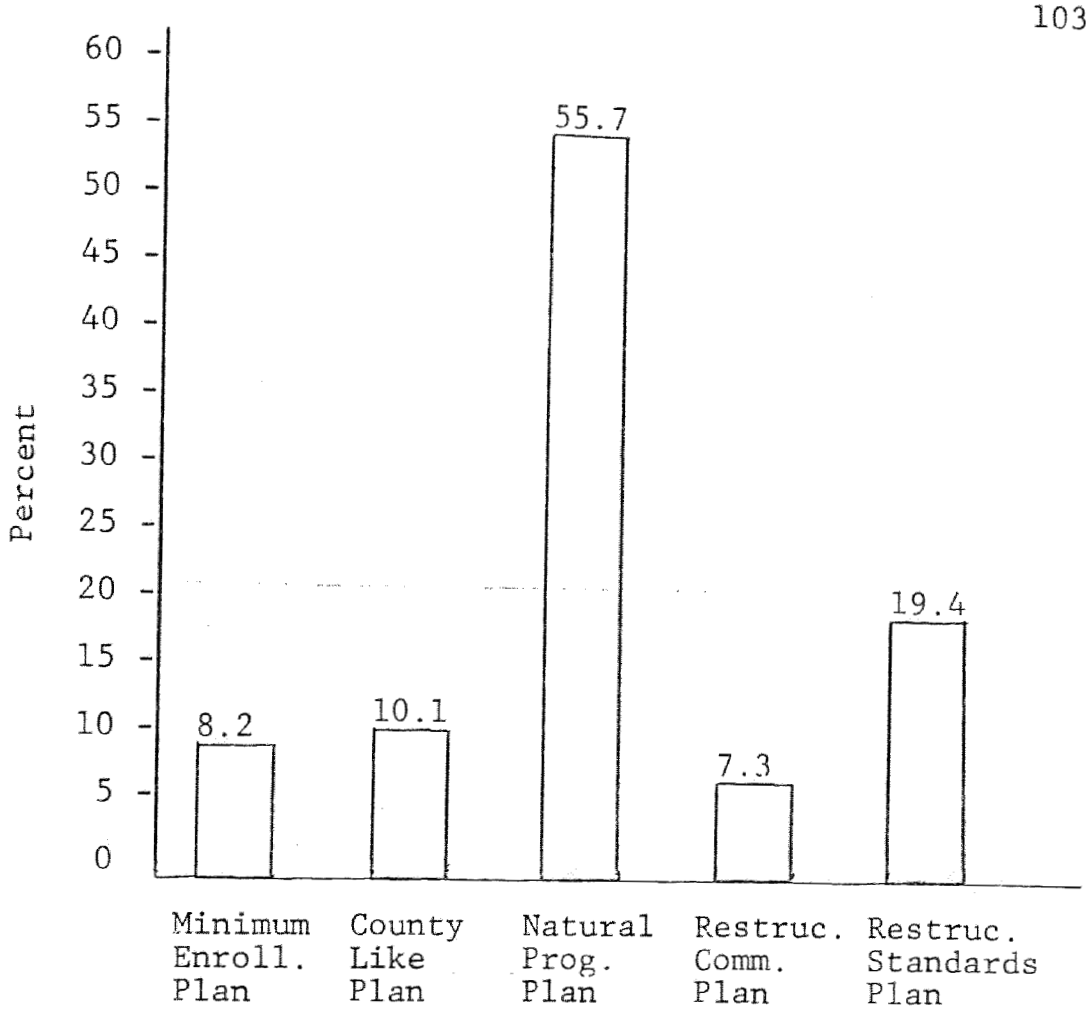

Figure 9

Percentage of Times Each Alternative Was Selectd As the Primary Plan to Consider in Reorganization

Figure 9 identifies by percentage the number of respondents who selected each plan as a first choice. Because not all respondents ranked all five plans the percentages total slightly more than 100 percent. The natural progression plan emerges as the plan with the most support (55.7 percent) from all board members. This plan gathered more first choices than all other

plans combined (44.3 percent). No other single plan generated an average of 20.0 percent or more. Again, the restructuring commission plan (7.3 percent), minimum emrollment plan (8.2 percent), and county-like plan (10.1 percent) have little support from board members across the state. This research is based on board members who responded without regard to enrollment size of school districts, experience of board members, or geographic location of the districts.

Figure 10 depicts by percentage the number of respondents who selected each of the five plans as one the top two choices. Each column has a score which must range between 0 and 100. The natural progression plan (71.3 percent) and restructuring standards plan (56.0 percent) received considerably more support than the other three plans proposed. The natural progression plan received nearly twice as much support as the number three choice, the county-like plan (28.8 percent). The minimum enrollment plan received first or second choice support from 21.6 percent of all board members, the lowest rate of support of all five plans presented. The restructuring commission plan received slightly more support (23.0 percent) as a first or second choice. However, random choices would have resulted in each plan having 40.0 percent first or second choices.

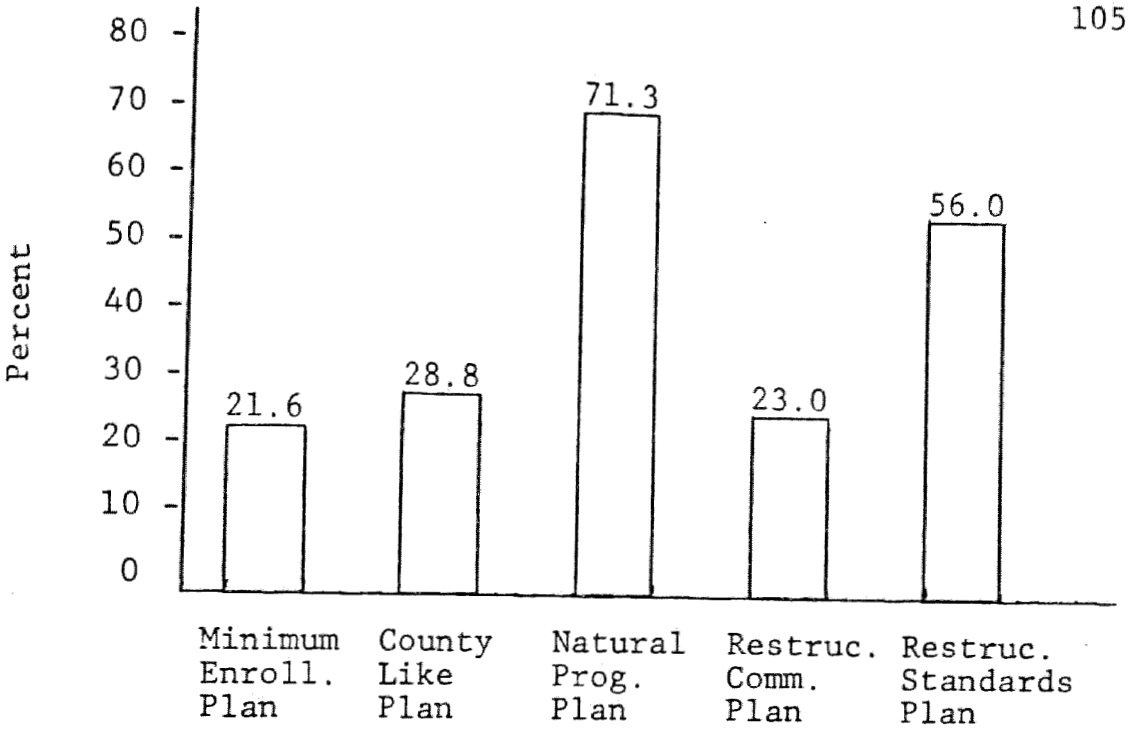

Figure 10

Percentage of Times Each Plan Was Selected As the First or Second Choice to Consider in Reorganization

The rate of least appropriate reorganization plan as seen by school board members is depicted in Figure 11. The plan perceived as the worst possible alternative most often was the minimum enrollment plan with 36.2 percent of all respondents selecting it as the poorest alternative. The restructuring commission plan was selected as the poorest alternative by 22.6 percent of the respondents and the county-like plan by 21.6 percent of the respondents. Only the restructuring standards plan (9.1 percent) and the natural progression plan (10.4 percent) had less than random chance opposition.

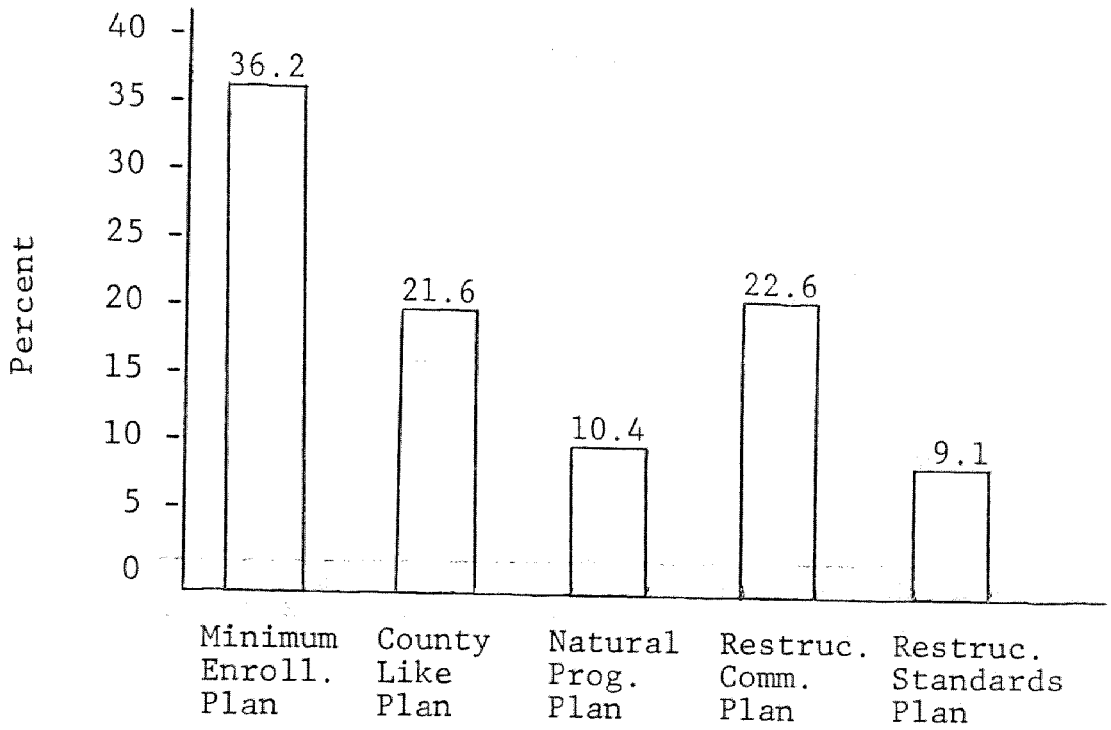

Figure 11

Percentage of Times Each Alternative Was Selected As the Least Favorite Plan to Consider in Reorganization

Table 18 identifies the areas of difference between groups of school board members based on district enrollment in relation to the choice of requiring that every school district must have at least 1,000 students enrolled or be required to reorganize with other districts.

School districts currently ranked at the bottom of the enrollment scale (0-300) showed the least amount of strong support of such a concept (2.9 percent) while school districts whose population ranged from 2,001-3,000 had board members strongly support such a concept at a 23.0 percent rate. When comparing first and second

Table 18

Minimum Enrollment Reorganization Plan
Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	7 20.1 2.9% -13.1 -2.9 -3.3	22 39.1 4.6% -17.1 -2.7 -3.5	20 24.7 6.6% -4.7 -1.0 -1.1	21 12.3 14.0% 8.7 2.5 2.7	19 7.8 20.0% 11.2 4.0 4.3	14 5.0 23.0% 9.0 4.0 4.3	13 7.0 15.1% 6.0 2.2 2.4	116 8.2%
2	14 32.9 5.7% -18.9 -3.3 -3.9	35 64.0 7.3% -29.0 -3.6 -4.8	46 40.5 15.2% 5.5 .9 1.0	38 20.1 25.3% 17.9 4.0 4.5	19 12.7 20.0% 6.3 1.8 1.9	15 8.2 24.6% 6.8 2.4 2.6	23 11.5 26.7% 11.5 3.4 3.7	190 13.4%
3	33 46.7 13.5% -13.7 -2.0 -2.5	75 91.0 15.7% -16.0 -1.7 -2.3	57 57.6 18.9% -.6 -.1 -.1	36 28.6 24.0% 7.4 1.4 1.6	26 18.1 27.4% 7.9 1.9 2.1	16 11.6 26.2% 4.4 1.3 1.5	27 16.4 31.4% 10.6 2.6 3.0	270 19.1%
4	65 56.6 26.5% 8.4 1.1 1.4	121 110.2 25.4% 10.8 1.0 1.4	67 69.7 22.2% -2.7 -.3 -.4	34 34.6 22.7% -.6 -.1 -.1	18 21.9 18.9% -3.9 -.8 -1.0	7 14.1 11.5% -7.1 -1.9 -2.2	15 19.9 17.4% -4.9 -1.1 -1.3	327 23.1%
5	126 88.8 51.4% 37.2 4.0 5.4	224 172.8 47.0% 51.2 3.9 6.0	112 109.4 37.1% 2.6 .2 .3	21 54.3 14.0% -33.3 -4.5 -6.0	13 34.4 13.7% -21.4 -3.7 -4.7	9 22.1 14.8% -13.1 -2.8 -3.6	8 31.2 9.3% -23.2 -4.1 -5.4	513 36.2%
COLUMN TOTAL	245 17.3%	477 33.7%	302 21.3%	150 10.6%	95 6.7%	61 4.3%	86 6.1%	1416 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
239.37958	24	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 35 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

choices only 8.6 percent of those same small schools' board members supported the establishment of the minimum enrollment plan where nearly half (47.6 percent) of the

board members from the districts ranging in size from 2,001-3,000 supported such a concept.

When identifying opposition to such a plan the smallest districts had over half (51.4 percent) of the respective respondents rate such a plan as the least acceptable of the five alternatives while only 9.3 percent of the largest districts found such a plan the least favorable.

As each enrollment category increased in size the level of primary support for the minimum enrollment plan increased until the largest enrollment size was reached at which point the level of primary support decreased. Categories of enrollment and levels of primary support include district size 0-300 (2.9 percent), 301-600 (4.6 percent), 601-1,000 (6.6 percent), 1,001-1,500 (14.0 percent), 1,500-2,000 (20.0 percent), 2,000-3,000 (23.0 percent), and 3,000-plus (15.1 percent).

When analyzing the data in terms of least favorite plan a nearly perfect inverse correlation is found. Districts smallest in enrollment have the greatest opposition to the plan while those with the greatest enrollment have the least opposition. Categories of enrollment in assessing the minimum enrollment plan as the least acceptable alternative include district size 0-300 (51.4 percent), 301-600 (47.0 percent), 601-1,000 (37.1 percent), 1,001-1,500 (14.0 percent),

1,501-2,000 (13.7 percent), 2,001-3,000 (14.8 percent), and 3,001 -plus (9.3 percent).

Table 19 shows the areas of difference between groups of school board members based on district enrollment in relation to the plan for reorganizing districts in accordance with a county-like system. In utilizing such a system school districts would become congruous with Iowa's ninety-nine individual counties.

As a whole, board members supported this concept as the best alternative 10.1 percent of the time. Although there were some significant differences identified, no unique pattern of support or opposition emerged. School districts with enrollments between 1,001-1,500 supported this concept at the highest level (18.7 percent) while school districts with enrollments of 301-600 selected this alternative as the primary choice least often (6.0 percent).

When considering the county-like system as the least favorite alternative, districts with enrollments of 3,001-plus opposed the concept most often (37.2 percent). Districts with enrollments from 601-1,000 selected this alternative at the lowest rate (18.2 percent) of all seven enrollment categories.

Table 20 identifies the areas of difference between groups of school board members based on district enrollment in relation to the choice of reorganizing

Table 19

County-Like Reorganization Plan Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	COUNT 18 EXP VAL 24.9 COL PCT 7.3% RESIDUAL -6.9 STD RES -1.4 ADJ RES -1.6	COUNT 29 EXP VAL 48.7 COL PCT 6.0% RESIDUAL -19.7 STD RES -2.8 ADJ RES -3.7	COUNT 39 EXP VAL 30.7 COL PCT 12.9% RESIDUAL 8.3 STD RES 1.5 ADJ RES 1.8	COUNT 28 EXP VAL 15.2 COL PCT 18.7% RESIDUAL 12.8 STD RES 3.3 ADJ RES 3.7	COUNT 9 EXP VAL 9.6 COL PCT 9.5% RESIDUAL -.6 STD RES -.2 ADJ RES -.2	COUNT 11 EXP VAL 6.2 COL PCT 18.0% RESIDUAL 4.8 STD RES 1.9 ADJ RES 2.1	COUNT 10 EXP VAL 8.7 COL PCT 11.6% RESIDUAL 1.3 STD RES .4 ADJ RES .5	ROW TOTAL 144 10.1%
2	COUNT 43 EXP VAL 46.0 COL PCT 17.5% RESIDUAL -3.0 STD RES -.4 ADJ RES -.5	COUNT 112 EXP VAL 90.0 COL PCT 23.3% RESIDUAL 22.0 STD RES 2.3 ADJ RES 3.2	COUNT 54 EXP VAL 56.7 COL PCT 17.8% RESIDUAL -2.7 STD RES -.4 ADJ RES -.4	COUNT 18 EXP VAL 28.1 COL PCT 12.0% RESIDUAL -10.1 STD RES -1.9 ADJ RES -2.2	COUNT 15 EXP VAL 17.8 COL PCT 15.8% RESIDUAL -2.8 STD RES -.7 ADJ RES -.8	COUNT 14 EXP VAL 11.4 COL PCT 23.0% RESIDUAL 2.6 STD RES .8 ADJ RES .9	COUNT 10 EXP VAL 16.1 COL PCT 11.6% RESIDUAL -6.1 STD RES -1.5 ADJ RES -1.7	ROW TOTAL 266 18.7%
3	COUNT 59 EXP VAL 53.6 COL PCT 24.0% RESIDUAL 5.4 STD RES .7 ADJ RES .9	COUNT 114 EXP VAL 104.9 COL PCT 23.7% RESIDUAL 9.1 STD RES .9 ADJ RES 1.2	COUNT 73 EXP VAL 66.1 COL PCT 24.1% RESIDUAL 6.9 STD RES .9 ADJ RES 1.1	COUNT 24 EXP VAL 32.7 COL PCT 16.0% RESIDUAL -8.7 STD RES -1.5 ADJ RES -1.8	COUNT 21 EXP VAL 20.7 COL PCT 22.1% RESIDUAL .3 STD RES .1 ADJ RES .1	COUNT 8 EXP VAL 13.3 COL PCT 13.1% RESIDUAL -5.3 STD RES -1.5 ADJ RES -1.7	COUNT 11 EXP VAL 18.7 COL PCT 12.8% RESIDUAL -7.7 STD RES -1.8 ADJ RES -2.1	ROW TOTAL 310 21.8%
4	COUNT 78 EXP VAL 68.2 COL PCT 31.7% RESIDUAL 9.8 STD RES 1.2 ADJ RES 1.5	COUNT 133 EXP VAL 133.3 COL PCT 27.7% RESIDUAL -.3 STD RES .0 ADJ RES .0	COUNT 81 EXP VAL 84.0 COL PCT 26.7% RESIDUAL -3.0 STD RES -.3 ADJ RES -.4	COUNT 34 EXP VAL 41.6 COL PCT 22.7% RESIDUAL -7.6 STD RES -1.2 ADJ RES -1.5	COUNT 30 EXP VAL 26.3 COL PCT 31.6% RESIDUAL 3.7 STD RES .7 ADJ RES .9	COUNT 15 EXP VAL 16.9 COL PCT 24.6% RESIDUAL -1.9 STD RES -.5 ADJ RES -.6	COUNT 23 EXP VAL 23.8 COL PCT 26.7% RESIDUAL -.8 STD RES -.2 ADJ RES -.2	ROW TOTAL 394 27.7%
5	COUNT 48 EXP VAL 52.9 COL PCT 19.5% RESIDUAL -4.9 STD RES -.7 ADJ RES -.8	COUNT 93 EXP VAL 103.5 COL PCT 19.3% RESIDUAL -10.5 STD RES -1.0 ADJ RES -1.4	COUNT 55 EXP VAL 65.2 COL PCT 18.2% RESIDUAL -10.2 STD RES -1.3 ADJ RES -1.6	COUNT 45 EXP VAL 32.3 COL PCT 30.0% RESIDUAL 12.7 STD RES 2.2 ADJ RES 2.7	COUNT 20 EXP VAL 20.4 COL PCT 21.1% RESIDUAL -.4 STD RES -.1 ADJ RES -.1	COUNT 13 EXP VAL 13.1 COL PCT 21.3% RESIDUAL -.1 STD RES .0 ADJ RES .0	COUNT 32 EXP VAL 18.5 COL PCT 37.2% RESIDUAL 13.5 STD RES 3.1 ADJ RES 3.7	ROW TOTAL 306 21.5%
COLUMN TOTAL	246 17.3%	481 33.8%	303 21.3%	150 10.5%	95 6.7%	61 4.3%	86 6.0%	1422 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
76.01789	24	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 35 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

school districts through the natural progression plan which provides financial incentives for school districts that decide at the local level to reorganize with one

or more contiguous districts.

The smallest two categories of school districts supported this plan at a significantly higher rate than all other size districts. Districts in the 0-300 range supported this plan at a 70.9 percent rate while those districts ranging in size from 301-600 selected this plan as a first choice 71.9 percent of the time. School districts with enrollments above 1,000 all supported the natural progression plan at a rate significantly less than the smaller districts. There was a minimum of 39.4 percentage points less support from districts above 1,000 in enrollment. When listing priority choices school districts ranging from 1,001-1,500 selected this plan at a 26.8 percent rate, school districts from 1,501-2,000 31.6 percent, districts from 2,001-3,000 19.7 percent, and school districts from 3,001-plus 25.6 percent. As shown in Figure 9, 55.7 percent of all respondents selected the natural progression plan as the top priority choice. However, of the 798 priority one choices for this plan 526 or 65.9 percent of those choices were made by school board members from districts of 600 students or less. School districts ranging in size from 1,001-1,500, 2,001-3,000, and 3,001-plus all selected the restructuring standards plan above the natural progression plan according to respondents first choices.

Table 20

Natural Progression Reorganization Plan
Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	175 137.5 70.9% 37.5 3.2 5.3	351 271.8 71.9% 79.2 4.8 8.9	168 171.0 54.7% -3.0 -.2 -.4	40 83.0 26.8% -43.0 -4.7 -7.5	30 52.9 31.6% -22.9 -3.1 -4.9	12 34.0 19.7% -22.0 -3.8 -5.8	22 47.9 25.6% -25.9 -3.7 -5.8	798 55.7%
2	38 38.4 15.4% -.4 -.1 -.1	64 75.9 13.1% -11.9 -1.4 -1.8	55 47.8 17.9% 7.2 1.0 1.3	27 23.2 18.1% 3.8 .8 .9	18 14.8 18.9% 3.2 .8 .9	8 9.5 13.1% -1.5 -.5 -.5	13 13.4 15.1% -.4 -.1 -.1	223 15.6%
3	20 23.4 8.1% -3.4 -.7 -.8	30 46.3 6.1% -16.3 -2.4 -3.1	33 29.1 10.7% 3.9 .7 .8	23 14.1 15.4% 8.9 2.4 2.6	10 9.0 10.5% 1.0 .3 .4	9 5.8 14.8% 3.2 1.3 1.4	11 8.2 12.8% 2.8 1.0 1.1	136 9.5%
4	6 22.1 2.4% -16.1 -3.4 -3.9	24 43.6 4.9% -19.6 -3.0 -3.8	23 27.4 7.5% -4.4 -.8 -1.0	29 13.3 19.5% 15.7 4.3 4.8	14 8.5 14.7% 5.5 1.9 2.1	13 5.4 21.3% 7.6 3.2 3.5	19 7.7 22.1% 11.3 4.1 4.4	128 8.9%
5	8 25.3 3.2% -17.3 -3.4 -4.0	19 50.1 3.9% -31.1 -4.4 -5.7	28 31.5 9.1% -3.5 -.6 -.7	30 15.3 20.1% 14.7 3.8 4.2	23 9.7 24.2% 13.3 4.2 4.6	18 6.3 29.5% 11.7 4.7 5.1	21 8.8 24.4% 12.2 4.1 4.5	147 10.3%
COLUMN TOTAL	247 17.2%	488 34.1%	307 21.4%	149 10.4%	95 6.6%	61 4.3%	86 6.0%	1433 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
308.96297	24	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 35 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

Differences occurred when evaluating the opposition to the natural progression plan. School districts in the 0-300 range of enrollment selected

this plan as the least acceptable 3.2 percent of the time and districts ranging in size from 301-600 selected the plan 3.9 percent of the time. However, larger districts selected this plan as the least acceptable at a higher rate with districts ranging from 1,001-1,500 (20.1 percent), 1,501-2,000 (24.2 percent), 2,001-3,000 (29.5 percent), and 3,001-plus (24.4 percent).

Table 21 shows only one area of difference between groups of school board members as related to district enrollment and selection of the restructuring by state appointed commission plan which calls for the state to appoint a special commission to set guidelines for reorganization and then to carry out reorganizing school districts in accordance with those guidelines.

Only 7.3 percent of all respondents supported the state commission plan as the best alternative. However, while school districts ranging in size from 0-300 were least likely to select the plan (3.7 percent) as the primary choice, school districts from the largest districts, 3,001-plus, supported such a plan as the best alternative 19.8 percent of the time.

There were no other notable differences between groups when analyzing the state commission plan compared with enrollments of school districts. Rather, most opposition was of a random nature. Districts with enrollments between 1,501-2,000 selected

Table 21

Restructuring Commission Plan Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	9 18.0 3.7% -9.0 -2.1 -2.4	22 35.1 4.6% -13.1 -2.2 -2.8	20 22.2 6.6% -2.2 -.5 -.5	18 10.9 12.1% 7.1 2.1 2.3	8 7.0 8.4% 1.0 .4 .4	10 4.5 16.4% 5.5 2.6 2.8	17 6.3 19.8% 10.7 4.3 4.6	104 7.3%
2	47 38.6 19.2% 8.4 1.4 1.6	61 75.3 12.8% -14.3 -1.6 -2.2	44 47.6 14.6% -3.6 -.5 -.6	35 23.5 23.5% 11.5 2.4 2.7	13 15.0 13.7% -2.0 -.5 -.6	6 9.6 9.8% -3.6 -1.2 -1.3	17 13.5 19.8% 3.5 .9 1.1	223 15.7%
3	84 76.1 34.3% 7.9 .9 1.2	166 148.5 34.7% 17.5 1.4 2.1	84 93.8 27.8% -9.8 -1.0 -1.4	39 46.3 26.2% -7.3 -1.1 -1.4	24 29.5 25.3% -5.5 -1.0 -1.3	22 19.0 36.1% 3.0 .7 .9	21 26.7 24.4% -5.7 -1.1 -1.4	440 31.1%
4	63 56.9 25.7% 6.1 .8 1.0	119 111.1 24.9% 7.9 .8 1.1	76 70.2 25.2% 5.8 .7 .9	24 34.6 16.1% -10.6 -1.8 -2.2	18 22.1 18.9% -4.1 -.9 -1.0	13 14.2 21.3% -1.2 -.3 -.4	16 20.0 18.6% -4.0 -.9 -1.0	329 23.2%
5	42 55.4 17.1% -13.4 -1.8 -2.2	110 108.0 23.0% 2.0 .2 .3	78 68.2 25.8% 9.8 1.2 1.5	33 33.7 22.1% -.7 -.1 -.1	32 21.5 33.7% 10.5 2.3 2.7	10 13.8 16.4% -3.8 -1.0 -1.2	15 19.4 17.4% -4.4 -1.0 -1.2	320 22.6%
COLUMN TOTAL	245 17.3%	478 33.8%	302 21.3%	149 10.5%	95 6.7%	61 4.3%	86 6.1%	1416 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
78.43389	24	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for level of significance allocated over 35 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

this alternative as the least favorite most often (33.7 percent) while school districts between 2,001-3,000 in enrollment selected this same alternative

last 16.4 percent of the time.

Table 22 shows the areas of notable difference between groups of school board members based on district enrollment when choosing the restructuring standards plan which calls for districts to meet state minimum standards without special aids such as sharing between districts or telecommunication systems and if unable to do so to be reorganized.

School districts ranging from 301-600 showed significantly less support (14.0 percent) than districts ranging in size from 1,501-2,000 (30.5 percent). There were other differences in levels of support for this plan, none of which were significant. All districts larger than 600 students supported this plan as the best alternative 24.5 percent of the time while school districts below 600 enrollment selected this plan at a 14.5 percent rate. School districts ranging in size from 0-1,000 students supported this alternative as the primary choice at a 16.2 percent rate and those districts with more than 1,000 student enrolled supported the same alternative in the same manner at a 27.9 percent rate.

The restructuring standards plan was selected as a second alternative by districts under 600 most often (43.0 percent). Although selecting the plan significantly less as the primary choice, it was

Table 22

Restructuring Standards Plan Compared by Enrollment Categories

Enrollment

Rank	0-300 (1)	301-600 (2)	601-1000 (3)	1001-1500 (4)	1501-2000 (5)	2001-3000 (6)	3001-PLUS (7)	ROW TOTAL
1	38 47.7 15.4% -9.7 -1.4 -1.7	68 93.8 14.0% -25.8 -2.7 -3.7	61 58.7 20.1% 2.3 .3 .4	42 28.9 28.2% 13.1 2.4 2.9	29 18.4 30.5% 10.6 2.5 2.8	14 11.8 23.0% 2.2 .6 .7	24 16.7 27.9% 7.3 1.8 2.1	276 19.4%
2	104 90.0 42.3% 14.0 1.5 2.0	210 177.1 43.4% 32.9 2.5 3.8	103 110.9 34.0% -7.9 -.7 -1.1	32 54.5 21.5% -22.5 -3.0 -4.0	30 34.8 31.6% -4.8 -.8 -1.0	18 22.3 29.5% -4.3 -.9 -1.2	24 31.5 27.9% -7.5 -1.3 -1.7	521 36.6%
3	49 45.4 19.9% 3.6 .5 .6	94 89.4 19.4% 4.6 .5 .7	57 56.0 18.8% 1.0 .1 .2	27 27.5 18.1% -.5 -.1 -.1	14 17.5 14.7% -3.5 -.8 -1.0	6 11.3 9.8% -5.3 -1.6 -1.8	16 15.9 18.6% .1 .0 .0	263 18.5%
4	34 40.4 13.8% -6.4 -1.0 -1.2	81 79.5 16.7% 1.5 .2 .2	52 49.8 17.2% 2.2 .3 .4	28 24.5 18.8% 3.5 .7 .8	15 15.6 15.8% -.6 -.2 -.2	12 10.0 19.7% 2.0 .6 .7	12 14.1 14.0% -2.1 -.6 -.6	234 16.4%
5	21 22.5 8.5% -1.5 -.3 -.4	31 44.2 6.4% -13.2 -2.0 -2.6	30 27.7 9.9% 2.3 .4 .5	20 13.6 13.4% 6.4 1.7 1.9	7 8.7 7.4% -1.7 -.6 -.6	11 5.6 18.0% 5.4 2.3 2.5	10 7.9 11.6% 2.1 .8 .8	130 9.1%
COLUMN TOTAL	246 17.3%	484 34.0%	303 21.3%	149 10.5%	95 6.7%	61 4.3%	86 6.0%	1424 100.0%

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance
65.79204	24	0.0000

Note: Adjusted Residuals - Significant at 3.2 (Critical value for .05 level of significance allocated over 35 cells); cells significantly different are enclosed.

selected considerably more as the second best choice. When combining first and second alternatives the restructuring standards plan had 56.0 percent support.

Districts under 1,000 students enrolled supported the plan 56.5 percent of the time, and districts above 1,000 enrollment had 54.5 percent support.

There was no unusual difference between groups which selected the restructuring standards plan when analyzed as the least acceptable alternative. As a whole only 9.1 percent of the respondents listed the restructuring standards plan as the least acceptable. Districts of less than 1,000 students listed this plan as least acceptable 7.9 percent while districts of 1,000 students or more listed such an alternative as the last choice 12.3 percent. Chance alone would have listed the alternative last at a rate of 20.0 percent.

Results of respondents were also analyzed according to years of experience on school boards.

Experience categories ranged from first term board members to six or more terms on local school boards. There were no differences between groups dependent on experience of board members as directors of local public school districts. Board members with experience more than 15.0 years on the board supported the minimum enrollment plan at the highest rate (15.0 percent) and board members with between 3.1-6.0 years of experience were least likely to rate this alternative as the top priority choice (7.6 percent). The minimum

enrollment plan was rated as the last choice most often by board members with 3.1 years experience (39.0 percent) while the plan was least likely to be rated as the last choice by board members with 9.1-12.0 years experience (27.9 percent).

The county-like plan also produced minimal difference in terms of support with board members who had 12.1-15.0 years of experience selecting it as a first choice priority most often (16.3 percent) and board members with 6.1-9.0 years on the board selecting the plan first least often (7.1 percent). Board members with 3.1-6.0 years of experience listed this alternative most often as the least preferred choice (23.5 percent) while those members with 12.-15.0 listed this alternative last 18.6 percent of the time.

The natural progression plan was the most often listed priority one choice at 55.7 percent. However, experience of board members was of only slight variance with the highest support level 60.0 percent for 15.1-plus years of experience and the lowest support level 50.3 percent for 6.1-9.0 years of experience as board members. Experience made little difference in labeling this category as the least favorite choice with the peak opposition 9.1-12.0 years of experience (18.2 percent) and the least opposition 3.1-6.0 years on the board (8.4 percent).

The restructuring commission plan had board members with 9.1-12.0 years of experience support the plan as a priority one choice at the highest rate (11.8 percent) and those with 15.1-plus years the lowest with no board member supporting such a concept. When evaluating opposition to this plan, board members with 12.1-15.0 years as board members listed this choice last most often (30.2 percent) while board members with 15.1-plus years opposed it the least (10.0 percent).

Board members with 6.1-9.0 years of experience identified the restructuring standards plan as a first choice most often (27.4 percent) and members with 12.1-15.0 years of experience least often (11.1 percent). Selecting this alternative as the least preferred choice came most often from board members with 15.1 years of board experience (20.0 percent) and least often from board members with 9.1-12.0 years of experience as school board members (5.9 percent).

Results were analyzed according to geographic region of the state as determined by location of each of the fifteen area education agencies. There were no differences observed based on specific geographic regions of the state.

Board members from Area Education Agency 9 supported the minimum enrollment plan as the priority choice most often (19.0 percent) and board members from Area

Education Agency 14 identified this alternative as the best choice at the lowest rate (2.7 percent). School districts in Area Education Agency 9 are predominantly urban while those from Area Education Agency 14 are predominantly rural. AEA 14 school district board members identified the minimum enrollment plan as the least favorite option most often (53.4 percent) while those from AEA 16 did so at the lowest rate (15.6 percent)

School board members from Area Education Agency 15 supported the county-like plan as the best alternative most often (28.9 percent), and board members from AEA 9 supported this as the best alternative at the lowest rate (1.6 percent). This same plan was listed as the least acceptable alternative most often by board members from districts in AEA 9 (29.7 percent) and was listed least often in AEA 13 (4.2 percent).

The natural progression plan was supported most strongly by Area Education Agency 12 school board members (67.6 percent) when listing as the first priority choice and least often (41.3 percent) by board members from AEA 16. When identifying least preferred alternatives, board members from AEA 16 listed this alternative last of the five most often (23.9 percent) and AEA 4 school board members least often (5.3 percent). Those two area education agencies are located in the southeast and northwest corners of the state respectively.

The restructuring commission plan produced top priority level support most often (12.8 percent) from school board members in Area Education Agency 6 and 11 with AEA 16 respondents supporting the plan as a first choice least often (2.2 percent). Board members residing in AEA 4 supported the plan most often as least acceptable (28.0 percent) while members from AEA 1 did so least often (16.1 percent). Those area education agencies are located in the northwest and northeast corners of the state respectively.

The restructuring standards plan was listed as the best possible alternative most often (27.0 percent) by board members who reside in Area Education Agency 9 and least often (10.3 percent) by those who live in AEA 12. Those area education agencies are located in the eastern most and western most parts of the state respectively. When listed as the least acceptable alternative this choice is listed most often (14.3 percent) by board members in AEA 9 amd least often (2.9 percent) by board members in AEA 12. Board members from AEA 9 both supported and opposed this plan at the highest rate.

All significant differences occurred only when district enrollment was a consideration when identifying which alternative method of school district reorganization in Iowa is most preferable to school

board members.

Figure 12 identifies by percentage the number of respondents who represent school districts of less than 1,000 in total enrollment and who selected any given plan as a first preferred option. Because not all plans were rated by all participants, percentages total slightly more than 100.0 percent. The natural progression plan was rated as the most preferred plan of all (66.7 percent) with the restructuring standards plan second most preferred at 16.2 percent when respondents were considering only first choices. The minimum enrollment plan (4.8 percent), restructuring commission plan (5.0 percent), and county-like plan (8.3 percent) received substantially less support as a priority one option than the other two plans. Districts of less than 1,000 students represent 76.1 percent of all school districts and 32.9 percent of all Iowa public school students.

Figure 13 shows by percentage the same information as Figure 12 with the exception that only board members representing school districts with student enrollment of more than 1,000 are included. The restructuring standards plan (27.9 percent) and the natural progression plan (26.6 percent) were the two alternatives which received the most support. All plans except the natural progression plan received more support from

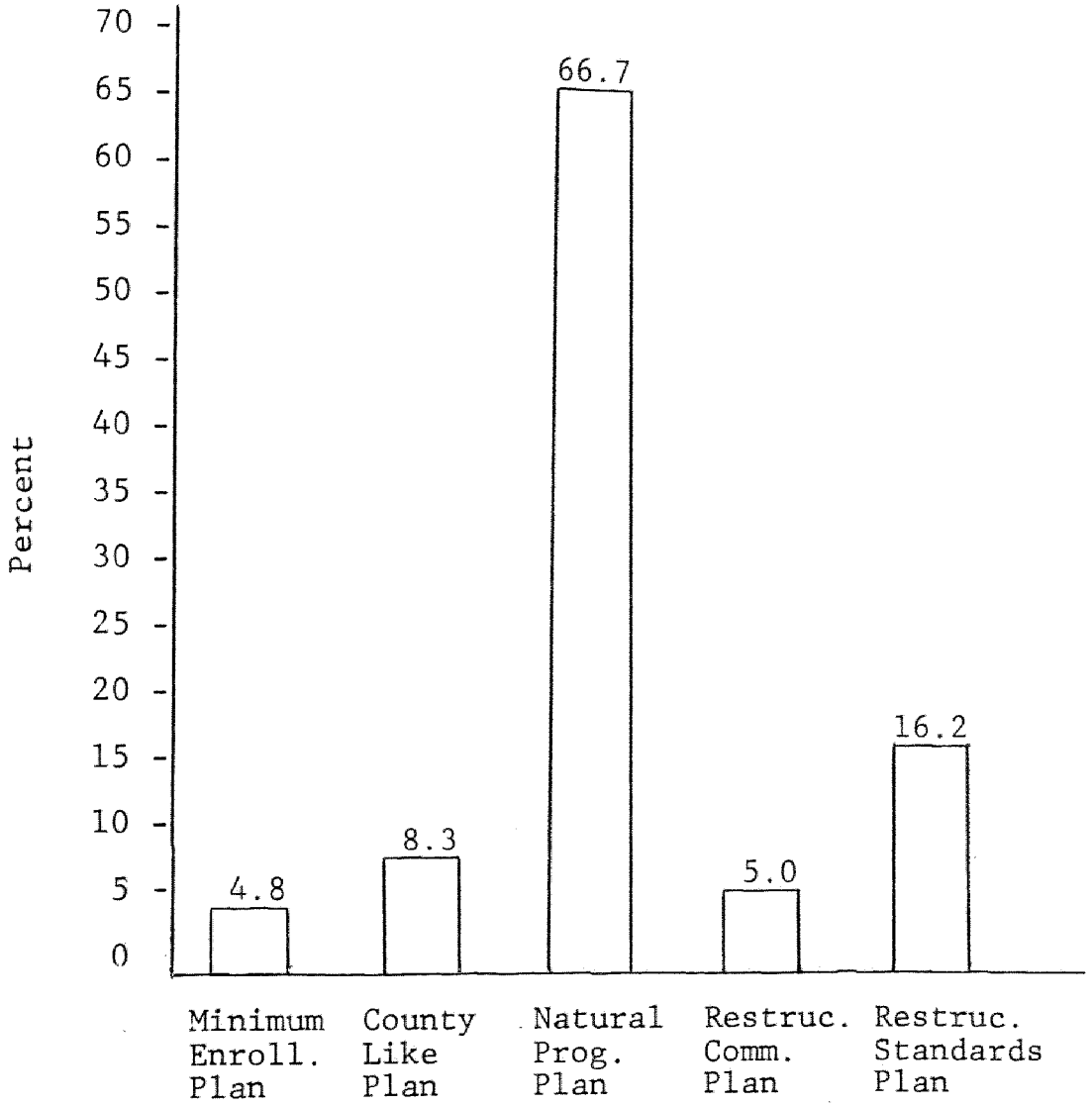

Figure 12

Percentage of Times Board Members from School Districts of Less than 1,000 Students Selected Each Alternative as the Primary Plan to Consider in Reorganization

the larger districts than the smaller ones. First priority choices for the minimum enrollment plan, county-like plan, and restructuring commission plan were 17.1 percent, 14.8 percent, and 13.6 percent respectively. Districts of more than 1,000 students

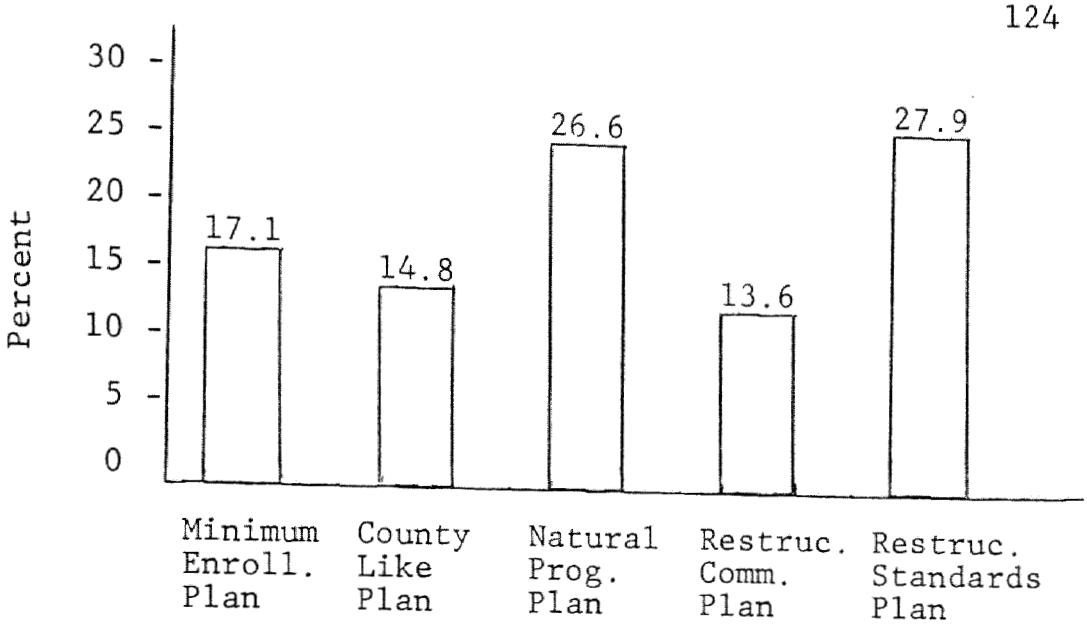

Figure 13

Percentage of Times Board Members from School Districts of More than 1,000 Students Selected Each Alternative as the Primary Plan to Consider in Reorganization

represent 23.9 percent of all school districts and 67.1 percent of all Iowa public school students.

The percentage of respondents from districts of fewer than 1,000 students who selected each alternative as the least appropriate is presented in Figure 14. Because not all plans were rated by all participants, percentages total slightly more than 100.0 percent. Small school districts rated the minimum enrollment plan as the least favorite most often (45.1 percent), and rated the natural progression plan (5.3 percent) and restructuring standards plan (7.9 percent) least often as the poorest plan. The last two plans were named 39.8 and 37.2 percentage points less often

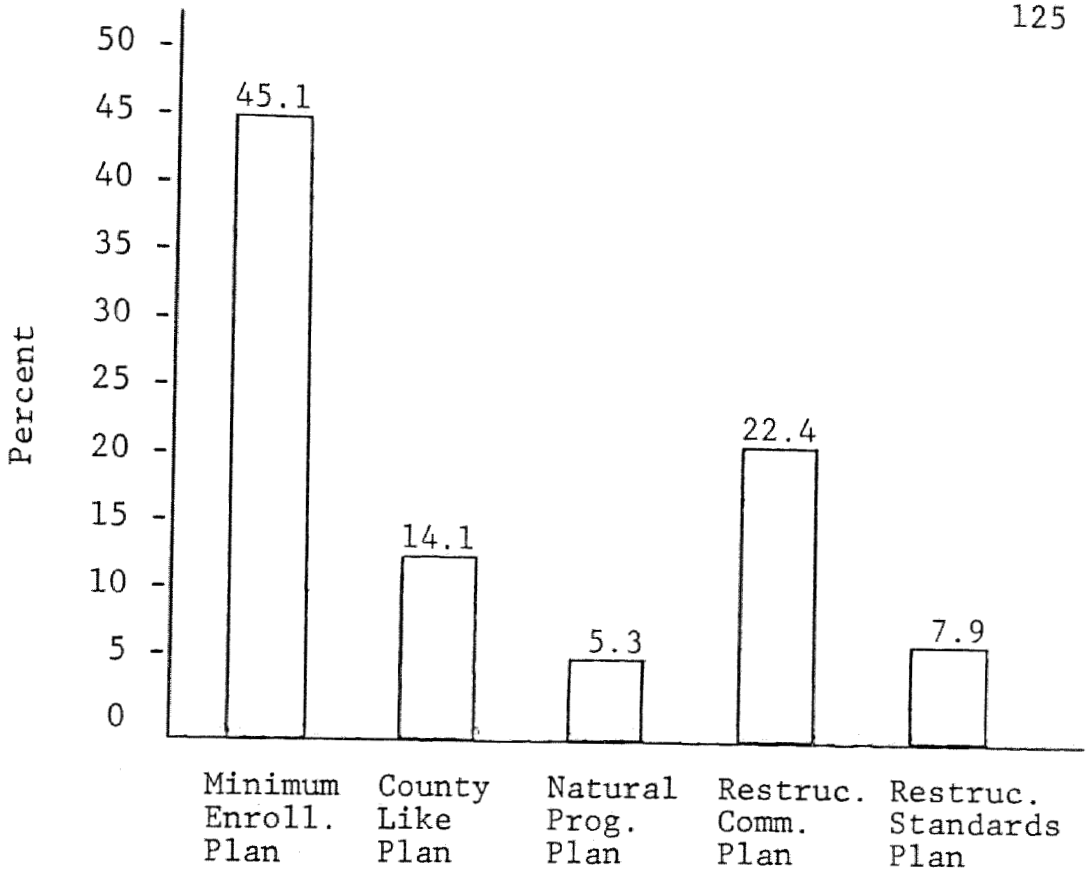

Figure 14

Percentage of Times Board Members from School Districts of Fewer than 1,000 Students Selected Each Alternative as the Least Favorite Plan to Consider in Reorganization

respectively than the minimum public school enrollment plan. The county-like plan was rated as the poorest alternative 19.1 percent of the time and the restructuring commission plan 22.4 percent of the time. Each plan would have received a score of 20.0 percent by chance.

Figure 15 shows by percentage the same information as Figure 14 with the exception that only board members representing school districts with enrollment larger than 1,000 are included. Because not all plans were

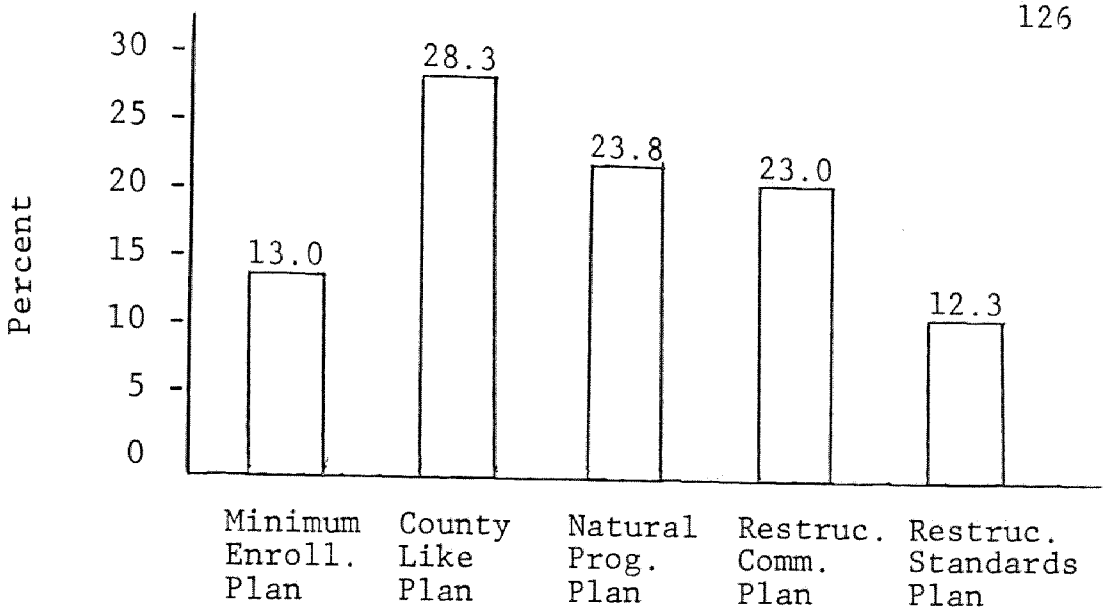

Figure 15

Percentage of Times Board Members from School Districts of More than 1,000 students selected Each Alternative as the Least Favorite Plan to Consider in Reorganization

rated by all participants, percentages total slightly more than 100.0 percent. Large districts opposed the county-like plan (28.3 percent), natural progression plan (23.8 percent), and restructuring commission plan (23.0 percent). The least amount of opposition was shown toward the restructuring standards plan (12.3 percent) and minimum enrollment plan (13.0 percent).

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Summary

Enrollment in Iowa's public school districts declined between the 1969-70 and 1986-87 school years. Some individual school districts experienced a greater decline in enrollment than others. Only a few districts experienced enrollment growth during the last twenty-eight years.

As school districts' enrollments declined pupil-teacher ratios also declined. The problem became how to continue to provide high quality education in Iowa as resources declined. Coupled with that problem was that of providing equal educational opportunities for all students. As a result, school districts began to share students, teachers, and programs. Reorganization also began to take place between districts. The resulting larger geographic districts could provide quality education programs more efficiently.

Reorganization is a controversial issue because local residents fight to keep independent school districts in order to maintain their individual community identities. As described in Chapter Four there is a perception that towns will die if they lose their schools.

It was the purpose of this study to identify potential reorganization methods which would be most acceptable to Iowa's school board members. It also was the intent of the researcher to share the study results with the Iowa General Assembly as that legislative body attempts to determine the direction for public school district reorganization. To accomplish this, perceptions of board members of local district patrons' reasons for objecting to reorganization were determined. The study also was designed to determine the method preferred by board members for reorganization under current Iowa law, board members believe should perform reorganization, and also to identify factors board members believe are most important in determining reorganization.

In Chapter 2 national perspectives of school district reorganization were reviewed in terms of appropriate enrollment necessary to achieve optimum student performance. Studies revealed that not only can school districts be too small in enrollment; they can also be too large. A review of Iowa legislative action relative to reorganization was conducted. Historical perspectives and trends concerning reorganization in Iowa were reviewed. Finally, an analysis of the current status of reorganization of public schools was considered ending with an explanation of

current specific alternatives which will be considered by the Iowa General Assembly in 1989.

In Chapter 3 the research methodology used in this study was described. The design of the study, instrument, population, and treatment of the data were also described.

Presentation and analysis of the data were contained in Chapter 4. The findings of the study included textual discussion as well as tabular reference.

Conclusions

Part I of the research instrument was designed to determine enrollment size of school districts represented by school board member respondents, their longevity on the local board as directors, and geographic region of their districts. This information was used to determine differences between groups concerning attitudes toward school district reorganization. Seventy-two percent of the board members represented school districts of 1,000 student enrollment or fewer while 28 percent represented districts of more than 1,000 students. Board members in their first or second terms on the boards made up 75.7 percent of all board members while 24.3 percent had served more than two terms. Board member responses were evenly distributed according to geographic location relative to student enrollment and number of school districts in each

area education agency. Board members' attitudes toward various school district reorganization concepts do not significantly vary based on either experience or geographic location. Attitudes do vary significantly based on student enrollment size of the respective individual school districts.

The second part of the survey produced results revealing that the most significant reasons given board members by district patrons as objections to school district reorganization are: (1) children would live too far from their attendance center, (2) the town would die if the school district were to reorganize, and (3) existing facilities would be wasted.

Results of Part III of the survey led to the conclusion that board members generally prefer the petition method of school district reorganization over the dissolution method. Again, school board members from districts of 1,000 students or fewer support the petition method more strongly than those of 1,000 or more student enrollment.

Results of the first section of Part IV produced results which led to the conclusion that school board members believe that school district reorganization should be determined by the local school district.

The study produced factors which should be

considered as most important in determining the number of school districts in Iowa as: (1) the ability to meet state minimum standards, (2) the breadth of instructional offerings, and (3) the number of students in a single district without consideration of what that number should be.

Board members prefer the natural progression plan of reorganization over all others in reorganizing Iowa's school districts. Board members representing districts of fewer than 1,000 student enrollment prefer the natural progression plan as the best alternative at a 66.7 percent rate. Those board members represented 76.1 percent of all board members and 32.9 percent of all Iowa public school students. School board members representing school districts of more than 1,000 student enrollment prefer the restructuring standards plan as the best alternative to utilize in reorganizing school districts. Such board members represent 23.9 percent of all board members and 67.1 percent of all Iowa public school students.

Discussion

The discussion of the major conclusions is presented categorically. Each of the conclusions is discussed individually.

It was determined that board members' responses varied significantly only by enrollment size of the

district. Board member longevity and geographic region as determined by area education agency had little impact on responses in general. It is not surprising that board members from districts of fewer than 1,000 enrollment tended to vote differently than board members from districts of more than 1,000 enrollment. Those smaller districts are most likely to be affected by any reorganization method. As such they are perhaps more emotional in their responses and less likely to support any proposal which could lead to a change. Board members from larger enrollment districts tend to accept such reorganization concepts more openly believing that they will be affected only minimally. However, all districts will probably be affected somewhat as the total number of districts is reduced.

As a group, board members indicated that the most important reasons local patrons give as objections to school district reorganization are: (1) children would live too far from their attendance center, (2) the town would die if the local district were reorganized, and (3) existing facilities would be wasted.

Iowa has a law which limits the amount of time an elementary student may ride a school bus to or from an attendance center to sixty minutes each way.

Should districts become larger than typical Iowa counties it would become nearly impossible to comply with that statute. Although this is not a major logistical problem in most of Iowa, it could be a factor in the more sparsely populated areas of the state. Any change in school district reorganization regulations would need to consider this current law.

The belief that the town would die if the attendance center was closed may have some merit. Families with young children do not tend to move into towns without schools. However, towns without children don't need schools. The issue then becomes whether the existence of children creates a need for schools or the existence of schools causes families with children to move to towns with schools. Since most school facilities are erected because of student needs, it would seem that reorganization should also reflect student needs.

The reason for objecting to school district reorganization on the basis of wasting existing facilities has merit. School facilities which stand empty will rapidly deteriorate. However, because of that fact, consideration needs to be given to turning vacant school buildings into community centers of some sort such as senior citizen's activity buildings, recreation centers, community club centers, or even

governmental operations centers. They could also be sold to private interests for a variety of uses dependent on the individual purchaser's specific design.

The conclusion that board members prefer the petition method over the dissolution method of the two methods of reorganization now allowed by law raises two key issues. Although the preference for the petition method was at a two-thirds rate why have no districts used the dissolution method if indeed one-third of the board members support such a method? Second, if board members believe so strongly in local board decision making, why do they prefer the petition method which is citizen initiated reorganization over the dissolution method which is board initiated?

The conclusion that local boards should determine school district reorganization was strongly supported by board members from every area education agency, by board members from all different enrollment size districts, and from board members with every noted level of experience. If only one thing is gained from this study it should be that school board members overwhelmingly believe that local boards should determine their own implementation of any reorganization regulations whether state imposed or locally decided.

Three factors emerged as being more important in determining school district reorganization than six

others from a list of nine which were generated from research. Although there was general agreement from board members that these were the three key factors, no effort was made to determine a definition of each factor. Therefore, it would be possible to have considerable agreement on any given factor and substantial disagreement as to the actual composition of that factor.

The ability to meet state minimum standards was supported most strongly by all board members as the most important criteria to consider in school district reorganization. An additional consideration would be the manner in which such standards could be met including such possible alternatives as regular class instruction, sharing students across school district boundaries, sharing teachers with contiguous districts, utilization of telecommunication systems, and correspondence courses. Depending on which of these alternative methods are allowed to meet minimum standards could influence the level of support for using this method. Such a definition was included in the final section of the questionnaire and results appear to have been impacted because of the narrow limits given there, but not in Part IV (2).

Most board members (60.3 percent) rated breadth of instructional offerings as a significant factor in reorganization of public school districts. However,

again there was no real definition as to what "breadth of program" meant. In some cases it could have meant state minimum requirements while in others board members could have considered it to mean multiple languages and advanced collegiate level courses in every curriculum area.

Surprisingly, board members identified the number of students in a district as the third most important factor in determining reorganization. However, this factor was supported at a much lower rate (42.6 percent) than the above two factors. No number was given as to what that minimum enrollment figure should be. However, when 1,000 was identified as a minimum enrollment figure as in the last section of the questionnaire, it was found as a preferred alternative by only 8.2 percent of all respondents.

It would be valuable to replicate this study in a few years and add more definition to various alternatives. Such a study would not only verify this research, but would also add to it.

Board member preference (66.7 percent) for the natural progression plan is cause for additional clarification. Iowa school board members generally come from small districts, those of fewer than 1,000 enrollment (76.1 percent of all board members). This amounts to one board member for every 90.5 students

while the remaining board members, those representing districts of more than 1,000 student enrollment, have a ratio of one board member for every 586.8 students. Obviously a representation problem exists although it is unclear as to whether board members representing the fewest students but impacted the most should affect reorganization plans greatest or whether the board members representing the largest number of students but impacted the least should have the most influence on such plans.

If reorganization of Iowa's public school districts is indeed to take place, it will not be an easy process. All board members want to do what's best for the children of the state. The disagreement arises when it is necessary to determine what is best for the children. That subject would be an interesting and valuable dissertation topic.

Recommendations

1. Further study in the area of what people are actually willing to accept in school district reorganization needs to be done.

2. Additional study needs to be conducted to determine if there are other reorganization issues or alternatives which should be considered prior to the implementation of any of the plans considered in this report.

3. Although issues were raised and alternative plans were considered in a ranked format, it was impossible to determine the individual level of support or opposition to any concepts presented. Additional study to determine amount of support or opposition.

4. Local boards need to carefully consider the existing reorganization alternatives very seriously. Little, if any, consideration is currently being given to the dissolution method of reorganization even when more than one-third of all board members surveyed felt this method was preferable to the petition method. Additional study to determine why school districts reorganize using only the petition method could be of value.

5. Local school districts should have the power to determine their own future as independent or reorganized school districts. State guidelines may be imposed, but districts capable of or willing to meet such guidelines without reorganizing should have the right to do so.

6. Any reorganization plan developed should be based on meeting state minimum standards, breadth of curriculum, and number of students. Further study to determine appropriate specifics in each of these categories would be valuable to the reorganization process. Although school board members agree that

these are the three key elements, the definition of each category will vary with each individual board member.

7. The restructuring standards plan should be given consideration by the Iowa General Assembly because this plan was supported most strongly by board members representing 67.1 percent of all Iowa's public school students.

8. The natural progression plan should be given consideration by the Iowa General Assembly because this plan was supported most strongly by board members (66.7 percent) whose districts would be likely to be impacted most, districts of fewer than 1,000 students.

9. Reorganization should be done by the local school districts utilizing state developed guidelines.

10. Local districts which have low enrollments should be allowed to continue to operate if district patrons are willing to provide financially for the students of such districts to enable them to have an education equal to that of all other students in the state as determined by meeting a set of rigorous minimum standards.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO AREA EDUCATION AGENCY ADMINISTRATORS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTING LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PACKETS

November 1, 1987

Dear AEA Administrator,

Please find enclosed materials as we had discussed earlier for you to distribute to your various school districts. Your willingness to do this as soon as possible is genuinely appreciated.

Once you receive the individual school districts' materials back, please send them to me as soon as possible. However, if you haven't received materials by December 1st, send what you have to me and I will deal directly with that school district.

I realize this is an inconvenience to you and hope that sharing the results of this reorganization study will be beneficial to you and help off-set some of that inconvenience which I have created for you.

Thanks very much for your assistance. This study would be impossible without your terrific help.

Sincerely,

Craig Scott

Craig Scott
315 Main Street
Huxley, Iowa 50124

P.S. Please bill me for the postage in returning the results to me. I will be happy to pay whatever you feel is appropriate.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO LOCAL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT REQUESTING ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTING SURVEYS

November 1, 1987

Dear Superintendent,

I need your help to complete an enclosed school board member questionnaire which will provide valuable information concerning school district reorganization, as well as give me necessary information to help complete my dissertation.

This survey should take from four to seven minutes to complete. I am asking superintendents to ask their board members to complete the survey at the beginning of the first November board meeting. Once completed you are requested to collect the surveys, put them in the enclosed envelope and return them to your AEA director.

Envelope identification is for follow-up only and all board members are guaranteed anonymity.

Enclosed are examples of questionnaires which show you the right way the forms should be done as well as the incorrect way should board members become confused. Please do not show them the examples but use them yourself to be sure they are following directions.

I really appreciate your support and will be happy to make the results available to you at your request.

Sincerely,

Craig Scott

Craig Scott
315 Main Street
Huxley, Iowa 50124

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO BOARD MEMBERS REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

November 1, 1987

Dear School Board Member,

I would appreciate it very much if you would take five minutes of your school board meeting time to complete the enclosed questionnaire.

I hope that the information collected will accurately reflect local school board member attitudes toward school district reorganization. A further goal is that the information can be used to tell our state legislature what should be done concerning school district reorganization as pointed out by those who know best, local school board members. In order to accomplish these goals, which will also meet part of my doctoral requirements in educational administration at Drake University, I really do need your help.

Dr. Ted Davidson, Executive Director of the Iowa Association of School Boards, has given this study his strong support. Ted feels that very valuable information will be gained and that it is particularly important that someone find out what school board members believe about reorganization.

Results of the survey will be made available to every school district through the IASB office or directly from me once the project is completed.

Your cooperation is genuinely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Craig Scott

Craig Scott
315 Main Street
Huxley, Iowa 50124

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

Part I. Please circle the appropriate response for each of the following items:

A. My school district's current enrollment is:

1. 0 - 300
2. 301 - 600
3. 601 - 1000
4. 1001 - 1500
5. 1501 - 2000
6. 2001 - 3000
7. 3001 - plus

B. I have served on the school board for the following years:

1. 0 - 3.0
2. 3.1 - 6.0
3. 6.1 - 9.0
4. 9.1 - 12.0
5. 12.1 - 15.0
6. 15.1 - plus

C. My school district lies in the following AEA: (The superintendent can tell you this information)

1. AEA 1
2. AEA 2
3. AEA 3
4. AEA 4
5. AEA 5
6. AEA 6
7. AEA 7
8. AEA 9
9. AEA 10
10. AEA 11
11. AEA 12
12. AEA 13
13. AEA 14
14. AEA 15
15. AEA 16

Part II. Please circle YES for each of the following statements that you have observed are often expressed by those who resist school district reorganization and circle NO for each statement not often given as a reason by those who oppose school district reorganization.

YES - NO 1. Transportation would be too complicated.

YES - NO 2. Taxes would increase.

YES - NO 3. The town would die if the school district reorganized.

YES - NO 4. Too many students would go to a single district.

YES - NO 5. Children would live too far from their attendance centers.

YES - NO 6. There would be more exposure to drugs and alcohol.

YES - NO 7. There would not be enough activities in which the students could participate.

YES - NO 8. Real estate property values would decline.

YES - NO 9. Existing facilities would be wasted.

YES - NO 10. Other (please state)_____

_____

_____

Part III. If your district had to reorganize, which current method allowed by law would you prefer? Please check only ONE blank.

_____ 1. Dissolution method: Dissolving the district and allowing current residents to merge with any adjacent district of their choice. For example: If your current district borders five other districts, your students could go to five other districts.

_____ 2. Petition method: The entire district merges with another district adjacent to yours. For example: If your current district borders five other districts, your residents would vote to merge with only one of the other five districts.

Part IV. Please rank order the following by placing a 1 by your first choice, a 2 by your second choice, a 3 by your third choice, and so on until all of the blanks have been filled. No number should be used more than one time.

1. SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION SHOULD BE DETERMINED:

_____ by the local district.

_____ by legislative action.

_____ by a state appointed commission.

_____ by each area education agency.

2. THE FOLLOWING FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE IN DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN IOWA:

_____ number of students in the district.

_____ square miles in the district.

_____ breadth of instructional offerings.

_____ cost of education per student.

_____ transportation of students in district.

_____ taxable valuation in district.

_____ accessibility to attendance center.

_____ number of professional staff in district.

_____ ability to meet state minimum standards.